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THE WORKS OF

Sir Walter Scott

INCLUDING

THE WAVERLEY NOVELS

AND THE POEMS

IN FIFTY VOLUMES

VOLUME XLVIII

'But distant far was Ellen's heart'

THE LADY OF THE LAKE

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS
THE FIELD OF WATERLOO

BY

SIR WALTER SCOTT

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'BUT DISTANT FAR WAS ELLEN'S HEART' *Frontispiece*

From a drawing by Eleanor F. Brickdale. (See page 120.)

BEN LEDI 12

'When rose Benledi's ridge in air.'

This view of the mountain was taken from the estate of Cambusmore.

THE BRIG O' TURK 14

'And when the Brigg of Turk was won,
The headmost horseman rode alone.'

The old bridge, crossing Finglas Water, remains very much the same as it was in Scott's time. It is the entrance to the Trossachs.

'WHERE TWINED THE PATH' 18

'But not a setting beam could glow
Within the dark ravines below,
Where twined the path in shadow hid.'

This view is a part of the road through the Trossachs to Loch Katrine.

LOCH KATRINE 20

'One burnished sheet of living gold,
Loch Katrine lay beneath him rolled,
In all her length far winding lay,
With promontory, creek, and bay,
And islands that, empurpled bright,
Floated amid the livelier light,

And mountains that like giants stand
To sentinel enchanted land.'

Loch Katrine, though scarcely known before the writing of the poem, is now the best known lake in Scotland and is visited annually by thousands of tourists.

THE OLD OAK ON ELLEN'S ISLE 24

'From underneath an aged oak
That slanted from the islet rock,
A damsel guider of its way,
A little skiff shot to the bay.'

Loch Katrine is now used as a reservoir to supply the city of Glasgow. The engineers found it necessary to raise the level twenty-five feet, and this submerged and killed the old oak. It also resulted in forming many other islands in the eastern end of the lake.

THE CHAPEL OF SAINT BRIDE 96

'. . . Where Teith's young waters roll,
Betwixt him and a wooded knoll
That graced the sable strath with green,
The chapel of Saint Bride was seen.'

A stone wall marks the site of the chapel, but the building itself has been completely destroyed.

THE GOBLIN CAVE 104

'It was a wild and strange retreat,
As e'er was trod by outlaw's feet.
The dell, upon the mountain's crest,
Yawned like a gash on warrior's breast;
Its trench had stayed full many a rock,
Hurled by primeval earthquake shock
From Benvenue's grey summit wild,
And here, in random ruin piled,
They frowned incumbent o'er the spot,
And formed the rugged sylvan grot.'

This pile of huge rocks is high up on the slope of Ben Venue, overlooking Loch Katrine, near the eastern end of the lake.

STIRLING CASTLE 168

'The Castle gates were open flung,
The quivering drawbridge rocked and rung.'

In the plaza in front of the entrance is a bronze heroic statue of King Robert Bruce, commemorating the victory of Bannockburn. Beneath the round tower on the right is a dungeon, corresponding with the prison of Roderick Dhu.

STIRLING CASTLE, THE PALACE 206

'Ellen, the while, with bursting heart,
Remained in lordly bower apart.'

Stirling Castle is, next to Edinburgh, the most important fortress in Scotland. It stands upon a rock four hundred and twenty feet high, from which the surrounding country may be seen, as far as the distant Grampian Hills. The bars upon the windows of the Palace, giving it the aspect of a prison, were placed for the protection of the infant King James VI, son of Mary, Queen of Scots, who was taken to Stirling from Edinburgh Castle on account of fears of a conspiracy against his life. The statue on the corner of the Palace represents King James V in the character of the Gudeman of Ballangeich, a disguise which the king was fond of assuming when he wished to wander about among the people.

TO

THE MOST NOBLE

JOHN JAMES

MARQUIS OF ABERCORN,

&c. &c. &c.

THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED

BY

THE AUTHOR

INTRODUCTION

AFTER the success of *Marmion*, I felt inclined to exclaim with Ulysses in the *Odyssey:* —

> Οὗτος μὲν δὴ ἄεθλος ἀάατος ἐκτετέλεσται·
> Νῦν αὖτε σκοπὸν ἄλλον.
>
> *Odys.* xxii. 5.
>
> One venturous game my hand has won to-day —
> Another, gallants, yet remains to play.

The ancient manners, the habits and customs of the aboriginal race by whom the Highlands of Scotland were inhabited, had always appeared to me peculiarly adapted to poetry. The change in their manners, too, had taken place almost within my own time, or at least I had learned many particulars concerning the ancient state of the Highlands from the old men of the last generation. I had always thought the old Scottish Gael highly adapted for poetical composition. The feuds and political dissensions which, half a century earlier, would have rendered the richer and wealthier part of the kingdom indisposed to countenance a poem, the scene of which was laid in the Highlands, were now sunk in the generous compassion which the English, more than any other nation, feel for the misfortunes of an honourable foe. The Poems of Ossian had by their popularity sufficiently shown that if writings on Highland subjects were qualified to interest the reader, mere national prejudices were, in the present day, very unlikely to interfere with their success.

I had also read a great deal, seen much, and heard more, of that romantic country where I was in the habit of spending some time every autumn; and the scenery of Loch Katrine was connected with the recollection of many a dear friend and merry expedition of former days. This poem, the action of which lay among scenes so beautiful and so deeply imprinted on my recollections, was a labour of love, and it was no less so to recall the

manners and incidents introduced. The frequent custom of James IV, and particularly of James V, to walk through their kingdom in disguise, afforded me the hint of an incident which never fails to be interesting if managed with the slightest address or dexterity.

I may now confess, however, that the employment, though attended with great pleasure, was not without its doubts and anxieties. A lady, to whom I was nearly related, and with whom I lived, during her whole life, on the most brotherly terms of affection, was residing with me at the time when the work was in progress, and used to ask me what I could possibly do to rise so early in the morning (that happening to be the most convenient to me for composition). At last I told her the subject of my meditations; and I can never forget the anxiety and affection expressed in her reply. 'Do not be so rash,' she said, 'my dearest cousin. You are already popular, — more so, perhaps, than you yourself will believe, or than even I, or other partial friends, can fairly allow to your merit. You stand high, — do not rashly attempt to climb higher, and incur the risk of a fall; for, depend upon it, a favourite will not be permitted even to stumble with impunity.' I replied to this affectionate expostulation in the words of Montrose, —

> He either fears his fate too much,
> Or his deserts are small,
> Who dares not put it to the touch
> To gain or lose it all.

'If I fail,' I said, for the dialogue is strong in my recollection, 'it is a sign that I ought never to have succeeded, and I will write prose for life: you shall see no change in my temper, nor will I eat a single meal the worse. But if I succeed, —

> Up with the bonnie blue bonnet,
> The dirk, and the feather, and a'!'

Afterwards I showed my affectionate and anxious critic the first canto of the poem, which reconciled her to my imprudence. Nevertheless, although I answered thus confidently, with the obstinacy often said to be proper to those who bear my surname,

I acknowledge that my confidence was considerably shaken by the warning of her excellent taste and unbiassed friendship. Nor was I much comforted by her retractation of the unfavourable judgment, when I recollected how likely a natural partiality was to effect that change of opinion. In such cases affection rises like a light on the canvas, improves any favourable tints which it formerly exhibited, and throws its defects into the shade.

I remember that about the same time a friend started in to 'heeze up my hope,' like the 'sportsman with his cutty gun,' in the old song. He was bred a farmer, but a man of powerful understanding, natural good taste, and warm poetical feeling, perfectly competent to supply the wants of an imperfect or irregular education. He was a passionate admirer of field-sports, which we often pursued together.

As this friend happened to dine with me at Ashestiel one day, I took the opportunity of reading to him the first canto of *The Lady of the Lake*, in order to ascertain the effect the poem was likely to produce upon a person who was but too favourable a representative of readers at large. It is of course to be supposed that I determined rather to guide my opinion by what my friend might appear to feel, than by what he might think fit to say. His reception of my recitation, or prelection, was rather singular. He placed his hand across his brow, and listened with great attention, through the whole account of the stag-hunt, till the dogs threw themselves into the lake to follow their master, who embarks with Ellen Douglas. He then started up with a sudden exclamation, struck his hand on the table, and declared, in a voice of censure calculated for the occasion, that the dogs must have been totally ruined by being permitted to take the water after such a severe chase. I own I was much encouraged by the species of revery which had possessed so zealous a follower of the sports of the ancient Nimrod, who had been completely surprised out of all doubts of the reality of the tale. Another of his remarks gave me less pleasure. He detected the identity of the king with the wandering knight, Fitz-James, when he winds

his bugle to summon his attendants. He was probably thinking of the lively, but somewhat licentious, old ballad, in which the *dénouement* of a royal intrigue takes place as follows: —

He took a bugle frae his side,
He blew both loud and shrill,
And four and twenty belted knights
Came skipping ower the hill;
Then he took out a little knife,
Let a' his duddies fa',
And he was the brawest gentleman
That was amang them a'.
And we 'll go no more a roving, etc.

This discovery, as Mr. Pepys says of the rent in his camlet cloak, was but a trifle, yet it troubled me; and I was at a good deal of pains to efface any marks by which I thought my secret could be traced before the conclusion, when I relied on it with the same hope of producing effect, with which the Irish post-boy is said to reserve a 'trot for the avenue.'

I took uncommon pains to verify the accuracy of the local circumstances of this story. I recollect, in particular, that to ascertain whether I was telling a probable tale I went into Perthshire, to see whether King James could actually have ridden from the banks of Loch Vennachar to Stirling Castle within the time supposed in the poem, and had the pleasure to satisfy myself that it was quite practicable.

After a considerable delay, *The Lady of the Lake* appeared in June, 1810; and its success was certainly so extraordinary as to induce me for the moment to conclude that I had at last fixed a nail in the proverbially inconstant wheel of Fortune, whose stability in behalf of an individual who had so boldly courted her favours for three successive times had not as yet been shaken. I had attained, perhaps, that degree of reputation at which prudence, or certainly timidity, would have made a halt, and discontinued efforts by which I was far more likely to diminish my fame than to increase it. But, as the celebrated John Wilkes is said to have explained to his late Majesty, that he himself, amid his full tide of popularity, was never a Wilkite, so I can, with honest truth, exculpate myself from having been

at any time a partisan of my own poetry, even when it was in the highest fashion with the million. It must not be supposed that I was either so ungrateful or so superabundantly candid as to despise or scorn the value of those whose voice had elevated me so much higher than my own opinion told me I deserved. I felt, on the contrary, the more grateful to the public, as receiving that from partiality to me, which I could not have claimed from merit; and I endeavoured to deserve the partiality by continuing such exertions as I was capable of for their amusement.

It may be that I did not, in this continued course of scribbling, consult either the interest of the public or my own. But the former had effectual means of defending themselves, and could, by their coldness, sufficiently check any approach to intrusion; and for myself, I had now for several years dedicated my hours so much to literary labour that I should have felt difficulty in employing myself otherwise; and so, like Dogberry, I generously bestowed all my tediousness on the public, comforting myself with the reflection that, if posterity should think me undeserving of the favour with which I was regarded by my contemporaries, 'they could not but say I *had* the crown,' and had enjoyed for a time that popularity which is so much coveted.

I conceived, however, that I held the distinguished situation I had obtained, however unworthily, rather like the champion of pugilism, on the condition of being always ready to show proofs of my skill, than in the manner of the champion of chivalry, who performs his duties only on rare and solemn occasions. I was in any case conscious that I could not long hold a situation which the caprice rather than the judgment of the public had bestowed upon me, and preferred being deprived of my precedence by some more worthy rival, to sinking into contempt for my indolence, and losing my reputation by what Scottish lawyers call the *negative prescription*. Accordingly, those who choose to look at the Introduction to *Rokeby*, will be able to trace the steps by which I declined as a poet to figure as a novelist; as the ballad says, Queen Eleanor sunk at Charing Cross to rise again at Queenhithe.

It only remains for me to say that, during my short preëminence of popularity, I faithfully observed the rules of moderation which I had resolved to follow before I began my course as a man of letters. If a man is determined to make a noise in the world, he is as sure to encounter abuse and ridicule, as he who gallops furiously through a village must reckon on being followed by the curs in full cry. Experienced persons know that in stretching to flog the latter, the rider is very apt to catch a bad fall; nor is an attempt to chastise a malignant critic attended with less danger to the author. On this principle, I let parody, burlesque, and squibs find their own level; and while the latter hissed most fiercely, I was cautious never to catch them up, as schoolboys do, to throw them back against the naughty boy who fired them off, wisely remembering that they are in such cases apt to explode in the handling. Let me add that my reign (since Byron has so called it) was marked by some instances of good-nature as well as patience. I never refused a literary person of merit such services in smoothing his way to the public as were in my power; and I had the advantage — rather an uncommon one with our irritable race — to enjoy general favour without incurring permanent ill-will, so far as is known to me, among any of my contemporaries.

ABBOTSFORD, April, 1830.

THE LADY OF THE LAKE

ARGUMENT

THE scene of the following Poem is laid chiefly in the vicinity of Loch Katrine, in the Western Highlands of Perthshire. The time of Action includes Six Days, and the transactions of each Day occupy a Canto.

CANTO FIRST

THE CHASE

HARP of the North! that mouldering long hast hung
On the witch-elm that shades Saint Fillan's spring,
And down the fitful breeze thy numbers flung,
Till envious ivy did around thee cling,
Muffling with verdant ringlet every string, —
O Minstrel Harp, still must thine accents sleep?
Mid rustling leaves and fountains murmuring,
Still must thy sweeter sounds their silence keep,
Nor bid a warrior smile, nor teach a maid to weep?

Not thus, in ancient days of Caledon,
Was thy voice mute amid the festal crowd,
When lay of hopeless love, or glory won,
Aroused the fearful or subdued the proud.

At each according pause was heard aloud
Thine ardent symphony sublime and high!
Fair dames and crested chiefs attention bowed;
For still the burden of thy minstrelsy
Was Knighthood's dauntless deed, and Beauty's matchless eye.

O, wake once more! how rude soe'er the hand
That ventures o'er thy magic maze to stray;
O, wake once more! though scarce my skill command
Some feeble echoing of thine earlier lay:
Though harsh and faint, and soon to die away,
And all unworthy of thy nobler strain,
Yet if one heart throb higher at its sway,
The wizard note has not been touched in vain.
Then silent be no more! Enchantress, wake again!

I

The stag at eve had drunk his fill,
Where danced the moon on Monan's rill,
And deep his midnight lair had made
In lone Glenartney's hazel shade;
But when the sun his beacon red
Had kindled on Benvoirlich's head,
The deep-mouthed bloodhound's heavy bay
Resounded up the rocky way,

And faint, from farther distance borne,
Were heard the clanging hoof and horn.

II

As Chief, who hears his warder call,
'To arms! the foemen storm the wall,'
The antlered monarch of the waste
Sprung from his heathery couch in haste.
But ere his fleet career he took,
The dew-drops from his flanks he shook;
Like crested leader proud and high
Tossed his beamed frontlet to the sky;
A moment gazed adown the dale,
A moment snuffed the tainted gale,
A moment listened to the cry,
That thickened as the chase drew nigh;
Then, as the headmost foes appeared,
With one brave bound the copse he cleared,
And, stretching forward free and far,
Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var.[1]

III

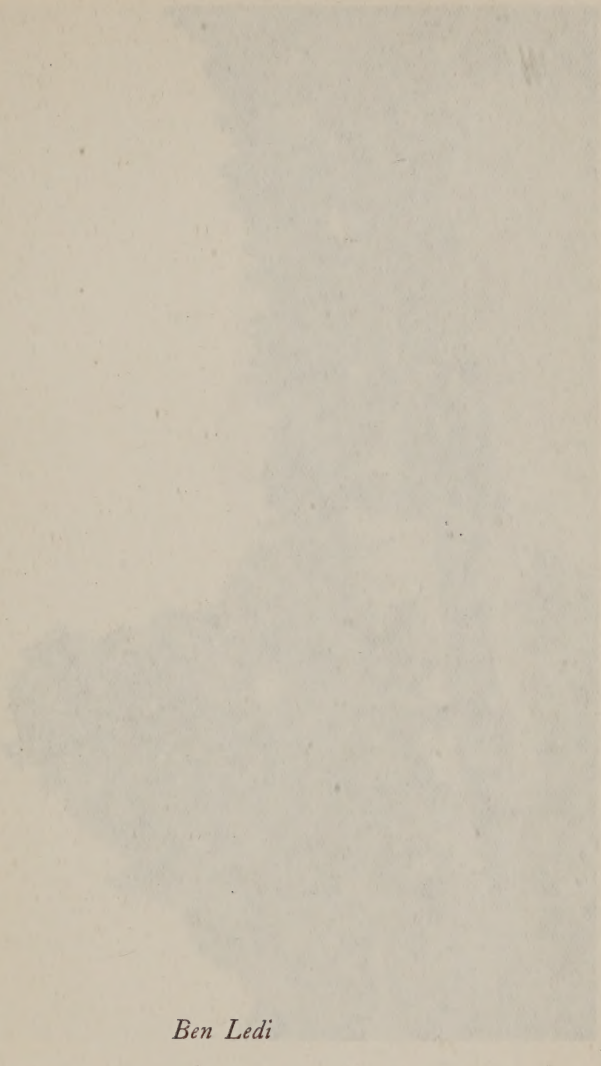
Yelled on the view the opening pack;
Rock, glen, and cavern paid them back;
To many a mingled sound at once
The awakened mountain gave response.

[1] See Note 1.

A hundred dogs bayed deep and strong,
Clattered a hundred steeds along,
Their peal the merry horns rung out,
A hundred voices joined the shout;
With hark and whoop and wild halloo,
No rest Benvoirlich's echoes knew.
Far from the tumult fled the roe,
Close in her covert cowered the doe,
The falcon, from her cairn on high,
Cast on the rout a wondering eye,
Till far beyond her piercing ken
The hurricane had swept the glen.
Faint, and more faint, its failing din
Returned from cavern, cliff, and linn,
And silence settled, wide and still,
On the lone wood and mighty hill.

IV

Less loud the sounds of sylvan war
Disturbed the heights of Uam-Var,
And roused the cavern where, 't is told,
A giant made his den of old;
For ere that steep ascent was won,
High in his pathway hung the sun,
And many a gallant, stayed perforce,
Was fain to breathe his faltering horse,



Ben Ledi

And of the trackers of the deer
Scarce half the lessening pack was near;
So shrewdly on the mountain-side
Had the bold burst their mettle tried.

V

The noble stag was pausing now
Upon the mountain's southern brow,
Where broad extended, far beneath,
The varied realms of fair Menteith.
With anxious eye he wandered o'er
Mountain and meadow, moss and moor,
And pondered refuge from his toil,
By far Lochard or Aberfoyle.
But nearer was the copsewood grey
That waved and wept on Loch Achray,
And mingled with the pine-trees blue
On the bold cliffs of Benvenue.
Fresh vigour with the hope returned,
With flying foot the heath he spurned,
Held westward with unwearied race,
And left behind the panting chase.

VI

'T were long to tell what steeds gave o'er,
As swept the hunt through Cambusmore;

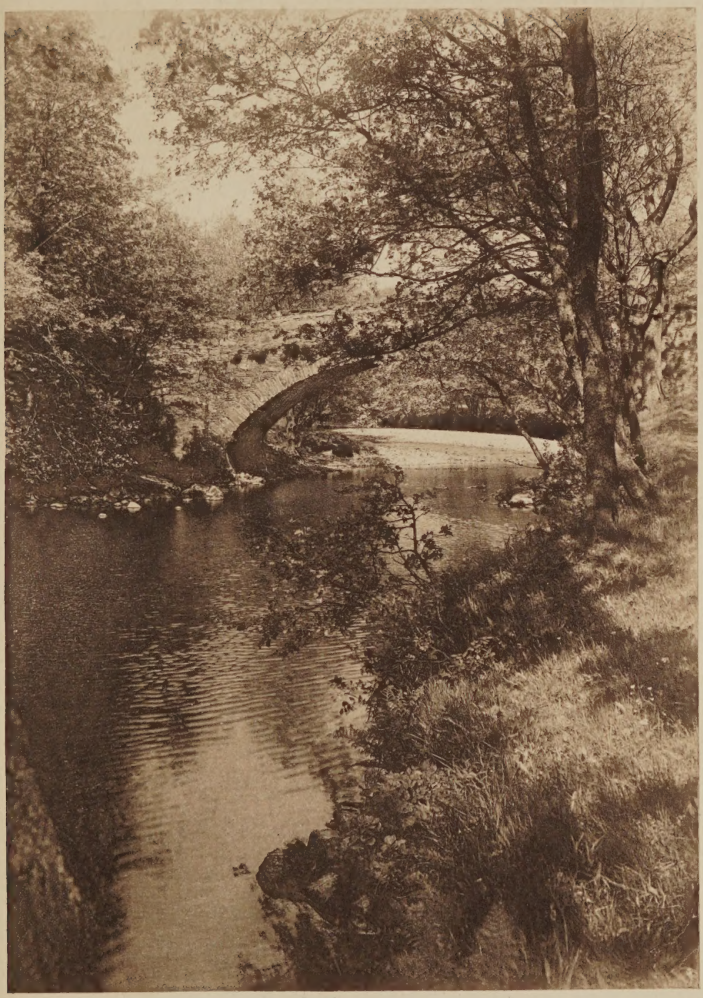
What reins were tightened in despair,
When rose Benledi's ridge in air;
Who flagged upon Bochastle's heath,
Who shunned to stem the flooded Teith, —
For twice that day, from shore to shore,
The gallant stag swam stoutly o'er.
Few were the stragglers, following far,
That reached the lake of Vennachar;
And when the Brigg of Turk was won,
The headmost horseman rode alone.

VII

Alone, but with unbated zeal,
That horseman plied the scourge and steel;
For jaded now, and spent with toil,
Embossed with foam, and dark with soil,
While every gasp with sobs he drew,
The labouring stag strained full in view.
Two dogs of black Saint Hubert's breed,[1]
Unmatched for courage, breath, and speed,
Fast on his flying traces came,
And all but won that desperate game;
For, scarce a spear's length from his haunch,
Vindictive toiled the bloodhounds staunch;
Nor nearer might the dogs attain,
Nor farther might the quarry strain.

1 See Note 2.

The Brig o' Turk



Thus up the margin of the lake,
Between the precipice and brake,
O'er stock and rock their race they take.

VIII

The Hunter marked that mountain high,
The lone lake's western boundary,
And deemed the stag must turn to bay,
Where that huge rampart barred the way;
Already glorying in the prize,
Measured his antlers with his eyes;
For the death-wound and death-halloo
Mustered his breath, his whinyard drew:[1]—
But thundering as he came prepared,
With ready arm and weapon bared,
The wily quarry shunned the shock,
And turned him from the opposing rock;
Then, dashing down a darksome glen,
Soon lost to hound and Hunter's ken,
In the deep Trosachs' wildest nook
His solitary refuge took.
There, while close couched the thicket she
Cold dews and wild flowers on his head,
He heard the baffled dogs in vain
Rave through the hollow pass amain,
Chiding the rocks that yelled again.

[1] See Note 3.

IX

Close on the hounds the Hunter came,
To cheer them on the vanished game;
But, stumbling in the rugged dell,
The gallant horse exhausted fell.
The impatient rider strove in vain
To rouse him with the spur and rein,
For the good steed, his labours o'er,
Stretched his stiff limbs, to rise no more;
Then, touched with pity and remorse,
He sorrowed o'er the expiring horse.
'I little thought, when first thy rein
I slacked upon the banks of Seine,
That Highland eagle e'er should feed
On thy fleet limbs, my matchless steed!
Woe worth the chase, woe worth the day,
That costs thy life, my gallant grey!'

X

Then through the dell his horn resounds,
From vain pursuit to call the hounds.
Back limped, with slow and crippled pace,
The sulky leaders of the chase;
Close to their master's side they pressed,
With drooping tail and humbled crest;
But still the dingle's hollow throat

Prolonged the swelling bugle-note.
The owlets started from their dream,
The eagles answered with their scream,
Round and around the sounds were cast,
Till echo seemed an answering blast;
And on the Hunter hied his way,
To join some comrades of the day,
Yet often paused, so strange the road,
So wondrous were the scenes it showed.

XI

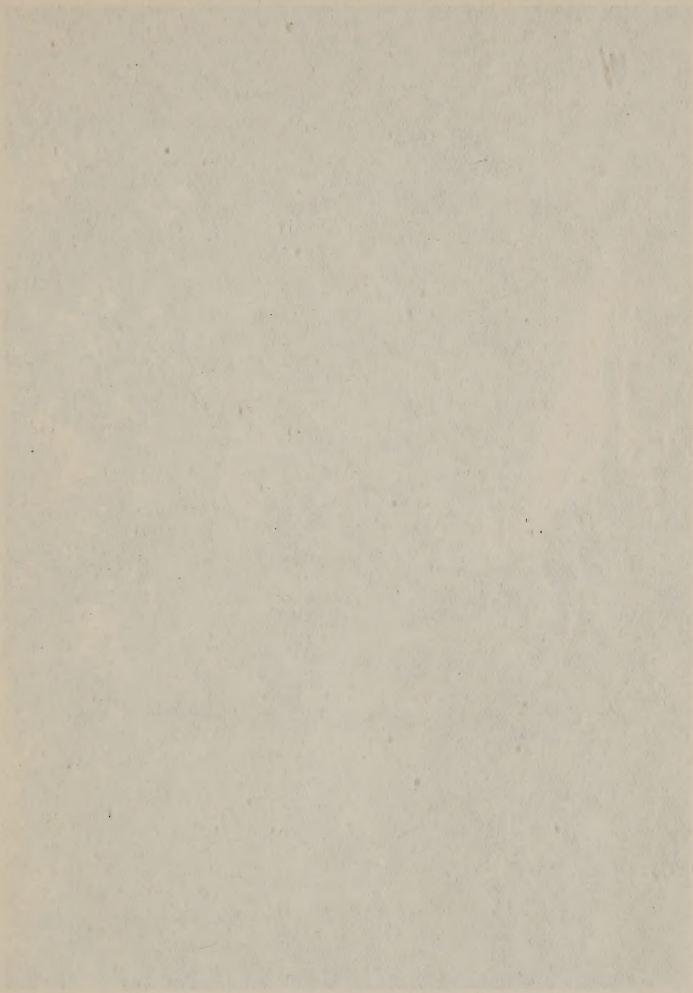
The western waves of ebbing day
Rolled o'er the glen their level way;
Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
Was bathed in floods of living fire.
But not a setting beam could glow
Within the dark ravines below,
Where twined the path in shadow hid,
Round many a rocky pyramid,
Shooting abruptly from the dell
Its thunder-splintered pinnacle;
Round many an insulated mass,
The native bulwarks of the pass,
Huge as the tower which builders vain
Presumptuous piled on Shinar's plain.[1]
The rocky summits, split and rent,

[1] The Tower of Babel (Gen. XI, 1–9).

Formed turret, dome, or battlement,
Or seemed fantastically set
With cupola or minaret,
Wild crests as pagod ever decked,
Or mosque of Eastern architect.
Nor were these earth-born castles bare,
Nor lacked they many a banner fair;
For, from their shivered brows displayed,
Far o'er the unfathomable glade,
All twinkling with the dewdrop sheen,
The brier-rose fell in streamers green,
And creeping shrubs of thousand dyes
Waved in the west-wind's summer sighs.

XII

Boon nature scattered, free and wild,
Each plant or flower, the mountain's child.
Here eglantine embalmed the air,
Hawthorn and hazel mingled there;
The primrose pale and violet flower
Found in each clift a narrow bower;
Foxglove and nightshade, side by side,
Emblems of punishment and pride,
Grouped their dark hues with every stain
The weather-beaten crags retain.
With boughs that quaked at every breath,
Grey birch and aspen wept beneath;



'Where twined the path'

Aloft, the ash and warrior oak
Cast anchor in the rifted rock;
And, higher yet, the pine-tree hung
His shattered trunk, and frequent flung,
Where seemed the cliffs to meet on high,
His boughs athwart the narrowed sky.
Highest of all, where white peaks glanced,
Where glistening streamers waved and dance
The wanderer's eye could barely view
The summer heaven's delicious blue;
So wondrous wild, the whole might seem
The scenery of a fairy dream.

XIII

Onward, amid the copse 'gan peep
A narrow inlet, still and deep,
Affording scarce such breadth of brim
As served the wild duck's brood to swim.
Lost for a space, through thickets veering,
But broader when again appearing,
Tall rocks and tufted knolls their face
Could on the dark-blue mirror trace;
And farther as the Hunter strayed,
Still broader sweep its channels made.
The shaggy mounds no longer stood,
Emerging from entangled wood,
But, wave-encircled, seemed to float,

Like castle girdled with its moat;
Yet broader floods extending still
Divide them from their parent hill,
Till each, retiring, claims to be
An islet in an inland sea.

XIV

And now, to issue from the glen,[1]
No pathway meets the wanderer's ken,
Unless he climb with footing nice
A far-projecting precipice.
The broom's tough roots his ladder made,
The hazel saplings lent their aid;
And thus an airy point he won,
Where, gleaming with the setting sun,
One burnished sheet of living gold,
Loch Katrine lay beneath him rolled,
In all her length far winding lay,
With promontory, creek, and bay,
And islands that, empurpled bright,
Floated amid the livelier light,
And mountains that like giants stand
To sentinel enchanted land.
High on the south, huge Benvenue
Down to the lake in masses threw
Crags, knolls, and mounds, confusedly hurled,

[1] See Note 4.

Loch Katrine

The fragments of an earlier world;
A wildering forest feathered o'er
His ruined sides and summit hoar,
While on the north, through middle air,
Ben-an heaved high his forehead bare.

XV

From the steep promontory gazed
The stranger, raptured and amazed;
And, 'What a scene were here,' he cried,
'For princely pomp or churchman's pride!
On this bold brow, a lordly tower;
In that soft vale, a lady's bower;
On yonder meadow far away,
The turrets of a cloister grey;
How blithely might the bugle-horn
Chide on the lake the lingering morn!
How sweet at eve the lover's lute
Chime when the groves were still and mute!
And when the midnight moon should lave
Her forehead in the silver wave,
How solemn on the ear would come
The holy matins' distant hum,
While the deep peal's commanding tone
Should wake, in yonder islet lone,
A sainted hermit from his cell,
To drop a bead with every knell!

And bugle, lute, and bell, and all
Should each bewildered stranger call
To friendly feast and lighted hall.

XVI

'Blithe were it then to wander here!
But now — beshrew yon nimble deer —
Like that same hermit's, thin and spare,
The copse must give my evening fare;
Some mossy bank my couch must be,
Some rustling oak my canopy.
Yet pass we that; the war and chase
Give little choice of resting-place; —
A summer night in greenwood spent
Were but to-morrow's merriment:
But hosts may in these wilds abound,
Such as are better missed than found;
To meet with Highland plunderers here[1]
Were worse than loss of steed or deer.
I am alone; — my bugle-strain
May call some straggler of the train;
Or, fall the worst that may betide,
Ere now this falchion has been tried.'

XVII

But scarce again his horn he wound,
When lo! forth starting at the sound,

[1] See Note 5.

From underneath an aged oak
That slanted from the islet rock,
A damsel guider of its way,
A little skiff shot to the bay,
That round the promontory steep
Led its deep line in graceful sweep,
Eddying, in almost viewless wave,
The weeping willow twig to lave,
And kiss, with whispering sound and slow,
The beach of pebbles bright as snow.
The boat had touched this silver strand
Just as the Hunter left his stand,
And stood concealed amid the brake,
To view this Lady of the Lake.
The maiden paused, as if again
She thought to catch the distant strain.
With head upraised, and look intent,
And eye and ear attentive bent,
And locks flung back, and lips apart,
Like monument of Grecian art,
In listening mood, she seemed to stand,
The guardian Naiad of the strand.

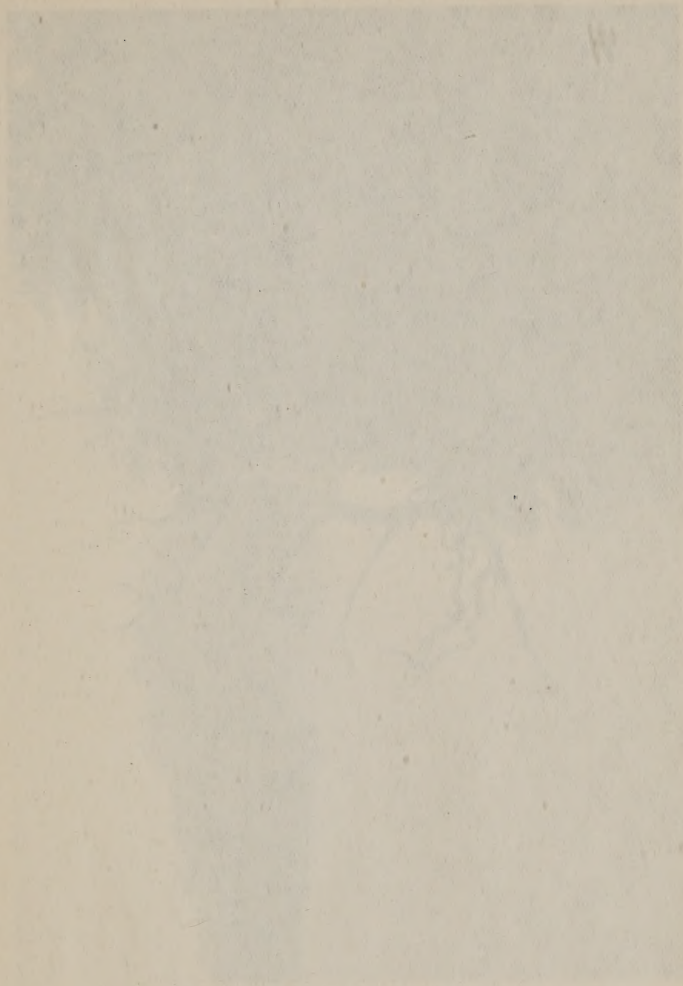
XVIII

And ne'er did Grecian chisel trace
A Nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace,
Of finer form or lovelier face!

What though the sun, with ardent frown,
Had slightly tinged her cheek with brown, —
The sportive toil, which, short and light,
Had dyed her glowing hue so bright,
Served too in hastier swell to show
Short glimpses of a breast of snow:
What though no rule of courtly grace
To measured mood had trained her pace, —
A foot more light, a step more true,
Ne'er from the heath-flower dashed the dew;
E'en the slight harebell raised its head,
Elastic from her airy tread:
What though upon her speech there hung
The accents of the mountain tongue, —
Those silver sounds, so soft, so dear,
The listener held his breath to hear!

XIX

A chieftain's daughter seemed the maid;
Her satin snood, her silken plaid,
Her golden brooch, such birth betrayed.
And seldom was a snood amid
Such wild luxuriant ringlets hid,
Whose glossy black to shame might bring
The plumage of the raven's wing;
And seldom o'er a breast so fair
Mantled a plaid with modest care,



The Old Oak on Ellen's Isle

And never brooch the folds combined,
Above a heart more good and kind.
Her kindness and her worth to spy,
You need but gaze on Ellen's eye;
Not Katrine in her mirror blue
Gives back the shaggy banks more true,
Than every free-born glance confessed
The guileless movements of her breast;
Whether joy danced in her dark eye,
Or woe or pity claimed a sigh,
Or filial love was glowing there,
Or meek devotion poured a prayer,
Or tale of injury called forth
The indignant spirit of the North.
One only passion unrevealed
With maiden pride the maid concealed,
Yet not less purely felt the flame; —
O, need I tell that passion's name?

XX

Impatient of the silent horn,
Now on the gale her voice was borne: —
'Father!' she cried; the rocks around
Loved to prolong the gentle sound.
Awhile she paused, no answer came; —
'Malcolm, was thine the blast?' the name
Less resolutely uttered fell,

The echoes could not catch the swell.
'A stranger I,' the Huntsman said,
Advancing from the hazel shade.
The maid, alarmed, with hasty oar
Pushed her light shallop from the shore,
And when a space was gained between,
Closer she drew her bosom's screen; —
So forth the startled swan would swing,
So turn to prune his ruffled wing.
Then safe, though fluttered and amazed,
She paused, and on the stranger gazed.
Not his the form, nor his the eye,
That youthful maidens wont to fly.

XXI

On his bold visage middle age
Had slightly pressed its signet sage,
Yet had not quenched the open truth
And fiery vehemence of youth;
Forward and frolic glee was there,
The will to do, the soul to dare,
The sparkling glance, soon blown to fire,
Of hasty love or headlong ire.
His limbs were cast in manly mould
For hardy sports or contest bold;
And though in peaceful garb arrayed,
And weaponless except his blade,

His stately mien as well implied
A high-born heart, a martial pride,
As if a baron's crest he wore,
And sheathed in armour trode the shore.
Slighting the petty need he showed,
He told of his benighted road;
His ready speech flowed fair and free,
In phrase of gentlest courtesy,
Yet seemed that tone and gesture bland
Less used to sue than to command.

XXII

Awhile the maid the stranger eyed,
And, reassured, at length replied,
That Highland halls were open still
To wildered wanderers of the hill.
'Nor think you unexpected come
To yon lone isle, our desert home;
Before the heath had lost the dew,
This morn, a couch was pulled for you;
On yonder mountain's purple head
Have ptarmigan and heath-cock bled,
And our broad nets have swept the mere,
To furnish forth your evening cheer.'
'Now, by the rood, my lovely maid,
Your courtesy has erred,' he said;
'No right have I to claim, misplaced,

The welcome of expected guest.
A wanderer, here by fortune tost,
My way, my friends, my courser lost,
I ne'er before, believe me, fair,
Have ever drawn your mountain air,
Till on this lake's romantic strand
I found a fay in fairy land!'

XXIII

'I well believe,' the maid replied,
As her light skiff approached the side, —
'I well believe, that ne'er before
Your foot has trod Loch Katrine's shore;
But yet, as far as yesternight,
Old Allan-bane foretold your plight, —
A grey-haired sire, whose eye intent
Was on the visioned future bent.[1]
He saw your steed, a dappled grey,
Lie dead beneath the birchen way;
Painted exact your form and mien,
Your hunting-suit of Lincoln green,
That tasselled horn so gaily gilt,
That falchion's crooked blade and hilt,
That cap with heron plumage trim,
And yon two hounds so dark and grim.
He bade that all should ready be

[1] See Note 6.

To grace a guest of fair degree;
But light I held his prophecy,
And deemed it was my father's horn
Whose echoes o'er the lake were borne.'

XXIV

The stranger smiled: — 'Since to your home
A destined errant-knight I come,
Announced by prophet sooth and old,
Doomed, doubtless, for achievement bold,
I'll lightly front each high emprise
For one kind glance of those bright eyes.
Permit me first the task to guide
Your fairy frigate o'er the tide.'
The maid, with smile suppressed and sly,
The toil unwonted saw him try;
For seldom, sure, if e'er before,
His noble hand had grasped an oar:
Yet with main strength his strokes he drew,
And o'er the lake the shallop flew;
With heads erect and whimpering cry,
The hounds behind their passage ply.
Nor frequent does the bright oar break
The darkening mirror of the lake,
Until the rocky isle they reach,
And moor their shallop on the beach.

XXV

The stranger viewed the shore around;
'T was all so close with copsewood bound,
Nor track nor pathway might declare
That human foot frequented there,
Until the mountain maiden showed
A clambering unsuspected road,
That winded through the tangled screen,
And opened on a narrow green,
Where weeping birch and willow round
With their long fibres swept the ground.
Here, for retreat in dangerous hour,
Some chief had framed a rustic bower.[1]

XXVI

It was a lodge of ample size,
But strange of structure and device;
Of such materials as around
The workman's hand had readiest found.
Lopped of their boughs, their hoar trunks bared,
And by the hatchet rudely squared,
To give the walls their destined height,
The sturdy oak and ash unite;
While moss and clay and leaves combined
To fence each crevice from the wind.

[1] See Note 7.

The lighter pine-trees overhead
Their slender length for rafters spread,
And withered heath and rushes dry
Supplied a russet canopy.
Due westward, fronting to the green,
A rural portico was seen,
Aloft on native pillars borne,
Of mountain fir with bark unshorn,
Where Ellen's hand had taught to twine
The ivy and Idæan vine,
The clematis, the favoured flower
Which boasts the name of virgin-bower,
And every hardy plant could bear
Loch Katrine's keen and searching air.
An instant in this porch she stayed,
And gaily to the stranger said:
'On heaven and on thy lady call,
And enter the enchanted hall!'

XXVII

'My hope, my heaven, my trust must be,
My gentle guide, in following thee!' —
He crossed the threshold, — and a clang
Of angry steel that instant rang.
To his bold brow his spirit rushed,
But soon for vain alarm he blushed,
When on the floor he saw displayed,

Cause of the din, a naked blade
Dropped from the sheath, that careless flung
Upon a stag's huge antlers swung;
For all around, the walls to grace,
Hung trophies of the fight or chase:
A target there, a bugle here,
A battle-axe, a hunting-spear,
And broadswords, bows, and arrows store,
With the tusked trophies of the boar.
Here grins the wolf as when he died,
And there the wild-cat's brindled hide
The frontlet of the elk adorns,
Or mantles o'er the bison's horns;
Pennons and flags defaced and stained,
That blackening streaks of blood retained,
And deer-skins, dappled, dun, and white,
With otter's fur and seal's unite,
In rude and uncouth tapestry all,
To garnish forth the sylvan hall.

XXVIII

The wondering stranger round him gazed,
And next the fallen weapon raised: —
Few were the arms whose sinewy strength
Sufficed to stretch it forth at length.
And as the brand he poised and swayed,
'I never knew but one,' he said,

'Whose stalwart arm might brook to wield
A blade like this in battle-field.'
She sighed, then smiled and took the word:
'You see the guardian champion's sword;
As light it trembles in his hand
As in my grasp a hazel wand:
My sire's tall form might grace the part
Of Ferragus or Ascabart,[1]
But in the absent giant's hold
Are women now, and menials old.'

XXIX

The mistress of the mansion came,
Mature of age, a graceful dame,
Whose easy step and stately port
Had well become a princely court,
To whom, though more than kindred knew,
Young Ellen gave a mother's due.
Meet welcome to her guest she made,
And every courteous rite was paid,
That hospitality could claim,
Though all unasked his birth and name.[2]
Such then the reverence to a guest,
That fellest foe might join the feast,
And from his deadliest foeman's door
Unquestioned turn, the banquet o'er.

[1] See Note 8. [2] See Note 9.

At length his rank the stranger names,
'The Knight of Snowdoun, James Fitz-James;
Lord of a barren heritage,
Which his brave sires, from age to age,
By their good swords had held with toil;
His sire had fallen in such turmoil,
And he, God wot, was forced to stand
Oft for his right with blade in hand.
This morning with Lord Moray's train
He chased a stalwart stag in vain,
Outstripped his comrades, missed the deer,
Lost his good steed, and wandered here.'

XXX

Fain would the Knight in turn require
The name and state of Ellen's sire.
Well showed the elder lady's mien
That courts and cities she had seen;
Ellen, though more her looks displayed
The simple grace of sylvan maid,
In speech and gesture, form and face,
Showed she was come of gentle race.
'T were strange in ruder rank to find
Such looks, such manners, and such mind.
Each hint the Knight of Snowdoun gave,
Dame Margaret heard with silence grave;
Or Ellen, innocently gay,

Turned all inquiry light away: —
'Weird women we! by dale and down
We dwell, afar from tower and town.
We stem the flood, we ride the blast,
On wandering knights our spells we cast;
While viewless minstrels touch the string,
'T is thus our charmèd rhymes we sing.'
She sung, and still a harp unseen
Filled up the symphony between.[1]

XXXI

SONG

'Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking;
Dream of battled fields no more,
Days of danger, nights of waking.
In our isle's enchanted hall,
Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,
Fairy strains of music fall,
Every sense in slumber dewing.
Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Dream of fighting fields no more;
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

'No rude sound shall reach thine ear,
Armour's clang of war-steed champing,

[1] See Note 10.

Trump nor pibroch summon here
  Mustering clan or squadron tramping.
Yet the lark's shrill fife may come
  At the daybreak from the fallow,
And the bittern sound his drum,
  Booming from the sedgy shallow.
Ruder sound shall none be near,
Guards nor warders challenge here,
Here's no war-steed's neigh and champing,
Shouting clans or squadrons stamping.'

XXXII

She paused, — then, blushing, led the lay,
To grace the stranger of the day.
Her mellow notes awhile prolong
The cadence of the flowing song,
Till to her lips in measured frame
The minstrel verse spontaneous came.

SONG CONTINUED

'Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;
  While our slumbrous spells assail ye,
Dream not, with the rising sun,
  Bugles here shall sound reveillé.
Sleep! the deer is in his den;
Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying:

Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen
How thy gallant steed lay dying.
Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;
Think not of the rising sun,
For at dawning to assail ye
Here no bugles sound reveillé.'

XXXIII

The hall was cleared, — the stranger's bed
Was there of mountain heather spread,
Where oft a hundred guests had lain,
And dreamed their forest sports again.
But vainly did the heath-flower shed
Its moorland fragrance round his head;
Not Ellen's spell had lulled to rest
The fever of his troubled breast.
In broken dreams the image rose
Of varied perils, pains, and woes:
His steed now flounders in the brake,
Now sinks his barge upon the lake;
Now leader of a broken host,
His standard falls, his honour's lost.
Then, — from my couch may heavenly might
Chase that worst phantom of the night! —
Again returned the scenes of youth,
Of confident, undoubting truth;
Again his soul he interchanged

With friends whose hearts were long estranged.
They come, in dim procession led,
The cold, the faithless, and the dead;
As warm each hand, each brow as gay,
As if they parted yesterday.
And doubt distracts him at the view, —
O were his senses false or true?
Dreamed he of death or broken vow,
Or is it all a vision now?

XXXIV

At length, with Ellen in a grove
He seemed to walk and speak of love;
She listened with a blush and sigh,
His suit was warm, his hopes were high.
He sought her yielded hand to clasp,
And a cold gauntlet met his grasp:
The phantom's sex was changed and gone,
Upon its head a helmet shone;
Slowly enlarged to giant size,
With darkened cheek and threatening eyes,
The grisly visage, stern and hoar,
To Ellen still a likeness bore. —
He woke, and, panting with affright,
Recalled the vision of the night.
The hearth's decaying brands were red,
And deep and dusky lustre shed,

Half showing, half concealing, all
The uncouth trophies of the hall.
Mid those the stranger fixed his eye
Where that huge falchion hung on high,
And thoughts on thoughts, a countless throng,
Rushed, chasing countless thoughts along,
Until, the giddy whirl to cure,
He rose and sought the moonshine pure.

XXXV

The wild rose, eglantine, and broom
Wasted around their rich perfume;
The birch-trees wept in fragrant balm;
The aspens slept beneath the calm;
The silver light, with quivering glance,
Played on the water's still expanse, —
Wild were the heart whose passion's sway
Could rage beneath the sober ray!
He felt its calm, that warrior guest,
While thus he communed with his breast: —
'Why is it, at each turn I trace
Some memory of that exiled race?
Can I not mountain maiden spy,
But she must bear the Douglas eye?
Can I not view a Highland brand,
But it must match the Douglas hand?
Can I not frame a fevered dream,

But still the Douglas is the theme?
I'll dream no more, — by manly mind
Not even in sleep is will resigned.
My midnight orisons said o'er,
I'll turn to rest, and dream no more.'
His midnight orisons he told,
A prayer with every bead of gold,
Consigned to heaven his cares and woes,
And sunk in undisturbed repose,
Until the heath-cock shrilly crew,
And morning dawned on Benvenue.

CANTO SECOND

THE ISLAND

I

At morn the black-cock trims his jetty wing,
'T is morning prompts the linnet's blithest lay,
All Nature's children feel the matin spring
Of life reviving, with reviving day;
And while yon little bark glides down the bay,
Wafting the stranger on his way again,
Morn's genial influence roused a minstrel grey,[1]
And sweetly o'er the lake was heard thy strain,
Mixed with the sounding harp, O white-haired Allan-bane!

II

SONG

'Not faster yonder rowers' might
Flings from their oars the spray,
Not faster yonder rippling bright,
That tracks the shallop's course in light,
Melts in the lake away,
Than men from memory erase
The benefits of former days;

[1] See Note 11.

Then, stranger, go! good speed the while,
Nor think again of the lonely isle.

'High place to thee in royal court,
High place in battled line,
Good hawk and hound for sylvan sport!
Where beauty sees the brave resort,
The honoured meed be thine!
True be thy sword, thy friend sincere,
Thy lady constant, kind, and dear,
And lost in love's and friendship's smile
Be memory of the lonely isle!

III

SONG CONTINUED

'But if beneath yon southern sky
A plaided stranger roam,
Whose drooping crest and stifled sigh,
And sunken cheek and heavy eye,
Pine for his Highland home;
Then, warrior, then be thine to show
The care that soothes a wanderer's woe;
Remember then thy hap erewhile,
A stranger in the lonely isle.

'Or if on life's uncertain main
Mishap shall mar thy sail;

If faithful, wise, and brave in vain,
Woe, want, and exile thou sustain
  Beneath the fickle gale;
Waste not a sigh on fortune changed,
On thankless courts, or friends estranged,
But come where kindred worth shall smile,
To greet thee in the lonely isle.'

IV

As died the sounds upon the tide,
The shallop reached the mainland side,
And ere his onward way he took,
The stranger cast a lingering look,
Where easily his eye might reach
The Harper on the islet beach,
Reclined against a blighted tree,
As wasted, grey, and worn as he.
To minstrel meditation given,
His reverend brow was raised to heaven,
As from the rising sun to claim
A sparkle of inspiring flame.
His hand, reclined upon the wire,
Seemed watching the awakening fire;
So still he sat as those who wait
Till judgment speak the doom of fate;
So still, as if no breeze might dare
To lift one lock of hoary hair;

So still, as life itself were fled
In the last sound his harp had sped.

V

Upon a rock with lichens wild,
Beside him Ellen sat and smiled.
Smiled she to see the stately drake
Lead forth his fleet upon the lake,
While her vexed spaniel from the beach
Bayed at the prize beyond his reach?
Yet tell me, then, the maid who knows,
Why deepened on her cheek the rose?
Forgive, forgive, Fidelity!
Perchance the maiden smiled to see
Yon parting lingerer wave adieu,
And stop and turn to wave anew;
And, lovely ladies, ere your ire
Condemn the heroine of my lyre,
Show me the fair would scorn to spy
And prize such conquest of her eye!

VI

While yet he loitered on the spot,
It seemed as Ellen marked him not;
But when he turned him to the glade,
One courteous parting sign she made;

And after, oft the knight would say,
That not when prize of festal day
Was dealt him by the brightest fair
Who e'er wore jewel in her hair,
So highly did his bosom swell
As at that simple mute farewell.
Now with a trusty mountain-guide,
And his dark stag-hounds by his side,
He parts, — the maid, unconscious still,
Watched him wind slowly round the hill;
But when his stately form was hid,
The guardian in her bosom chid, —
'Thy Malcolm! vain and selfish maid!'
'T was thus upbraiding conscience said, —
'Not so had Malcolm idly hung
On the smooth phrase of Southern tongue;
Not so had Malcolm strained his eye
Another step than thine to spy.'
'Wake, Allan-bane,' aloud she cried
To the old minstrel by her side, —
'Arouse thee from thy moody dream!
I'll give thy harp heroic theme,
And warm thee with a noble name;
Pour forth the glory of the Græme!' [1]
Scarce from her lip the word had rushed,
When deep the conscious maiden blushed;

[1] See Note 12.

For of his clan, in hall and bower,
Young Malcolm Græme was held the flower.

VII

The minstrel waked his harp, — three times
Arose the well-known martial chimes,
And thrice their high heroic pride
In melancholy murmurs died.
'Vainly thou bidst, O noble maid,'
Clasping his withered hands, he said,
'Vainly thou bidst me wake the strain,
Though all unwont to bid in vain.
Alas! than mine a mightier hand
Has tuned my harp, my strings has spanned!
I touch the chords of joy, but low
And mournful answer notes of woe;
And the proud march which victors tread
Sinks in the wailing for the dead.
O, well for me, if mine alone
That dirge's deep prophetic tone!
If, as my tuneful fathers said,
This harp, which erst Saint Modan swayed,[1]
Can thus its master's fate foretell,
Then welcome be the minstrel's knell!

[1] See Note 13.

VIII

'But ah! dear lady, thus it sighed,
The eve thy sainted mother died;
And such the sounds which, while I strove
To wake a lay of war or love,
Came marring all the festal mirth,
Appalling me who gave them birth,
And, disobedient to my call,
Wailed loud through Bothwell's bannered hall,
Ere Douglases, to ruin driven,[1]
Were exiled from their native heaven.
O! if yet worse mishap and woe
My master's house must undergo,
Or aught but weal to Ellen fair
Brood in these accents of despair,
No future bard, sad Harp! shall fling
Triumph or rapture from thy string;
One short, one final strain shall flow,
Fraught with unutterable woe,
Then shivered shall thy fragments lie,
Thy master cast him down and die!'

IX

Soothing she answered him: 'Assuage,
Mine honoured friend, the fears of age;

[1] See Note 14.

All melodies to thee are known
That harp has rung or pipe has blown,
In Lowland vale or Highland glen,
From Tweed to Spey — what marvel, then,
At times unbidden notes should rise,
Confusedly bound in memory's ties,
Entangling, as they rush along,
The war-march with the funeral song?
Small ground is now for boding fear;
Obscure, but safe, we rest us here.
My sire, in native virtue great,
Resigning lordship, lands, and state,
Not then to fortune more resigned
Than yonder oak might give the wind;
The graceful foliage storms may reave,
The noble stem they cannot grieve.
For me' — she stooped, and, looking round,
Plucked a blue harebell from the ground, —
'For me, whose memory scarce conveys
An image of more splendid days,
This little flower that loves the lea
May well my simple emblem be;
It drinks heaven's dew as blithe as rose
That in the King's own garden grows;
And when I place it in my hair,
Allan, a bard is bound to swear
He ne'er saw coronet so fair.'

Then playfully the chaplet wild
She wreathed in her dark locks, and smiled.

X

Her smile, her speech, with winning sway,
Wiled the old Harper's mood away.
With such a look as hermits throw,
When angels stoop to soothe their woe,
He gazed, till fond regret and pride
Thrilled to a tear, then thus replied:
'Loveliest and best! thou little know'st
The rank, the honours, thou hast lost!
O, might I live to see thee grace,
In Scotland's court, thy birthright place,
To see my favourite's step advance
The lightest in the courtly dance,
The cause of every gallant's sigh,
And leading star of every eye,
And theme of every minstrel's art,
The Lady of the Bleeding Heart!' [1]

XI

'Fair dreams are these,' the maiden cried,
Light was her accent, yet she sighed, —
'Yet is this mossy rock to me
Worth splendid chair and canopy;

[1] The well-known cognizance of the Douglas family.

Nor would my footstep spring more gay
In courtly dance than blithe strathspey,
Nor half so pleased mine ear incline
To royal minstrel's lay as thine.
And then for suitors proud and high,
To bend before my conquering eye, —
Thou, flattering bard! thyself wilt say,
That grim Sir Roderick owns its sway.
The Saxon scourge, Clan-Alpine's pride,
The terror of Loch Lomond's side,
Would, at my suit, thou know'st, delay
A Lennox foray — for a day.'

XII

The ancient bard her glee repressed:
'Ill hast thou chosen theme for jest!
For who, through all this western wild,
Named Black Sir Roderick e'er, and smiled?
In Holy-Rood a knight he slew; [1]
I saw, when back the dirk he drew,
Courtiers give place before the stride
Of the undaunted homicide;
And since, though outlawed, hath his hand
Full sternly kept his mountain land.
Who else dared give — ah! woe the day,
That I such hated truth should say! —

1 See Note 15.

The Douglas, like a stricken deer,
Disowned by every noble peer,[1]
Even the rude refuge we have here?
Alas, this wild marauding Chief
Alone might hazard our relief,
And now thy maiden charms expand,
Looks for his guerdon in thy hand;
Full soon may dispensation sought,
To back his suit, from Rome be brought.
Then, though an exile on the hill,
Thy father, as the Douglas, still
Be held in reverence and fear;
And though to Roderick thou'rt so dear
That thou mightst guide with silken thread,
Slave of thy will, this chieftain dread,
Yet, O loved maid, thy mirth refrain!
Thy hand is on a lion's mane.'

XIII

'Minstrel,' the maid replied, and high
Her father's soul glanced from her eye,
'My debts to Roderick's house I know:
All that a mother could bestow
To Lady Margaret's care I owe,
Since first an orphan in the wild
She sorrowed o'er her sister's child;

1 See Note 16.

To her brave chieftain son, from ire
Of Scotland's king who shrouds my sire,
A deeper, holier debt is owed;
And, could I pay it with my blood,
Allan! Sir Roderick should command
My blood, my life, — but not my hand.
Rather will Ellen Douglas dwell
A votaress in Maronnan's cell; [1]
Rather through realms beyond the sea,
Seeking the world's cold charity,
Where ne'er was spoke a Scottish word,
And ne'er the name of Douglas heard,
An outcast pilgrim will she rove,
Than wed the man she cannot love.

XIV

'Thou shak'st, good friend, thy tresses grey, —
That pleading look, what can it say
But what I own? — I grant him brave,
But wild as Bracklinn's thundering wave: [2]
And generous, — save vindictive mood
Or jealous transport chafe his blood:
I grant him true to friendly band,
As his claymore is to his hand;
But O! that very blade of steel
More mercy for a foe would feel:

[1] See Note 17. [2] See Note 18.

I grant him liberal, to fling
Among his clan the wealth they bring,
When back by lake and glen they wind,
And in the Lowland leave behind,
Where once some pleasant hamlet stood,
A mass of ashes slaked with blood.
The hand that for my father fought
I honour, as his daughter ought;
But can I clasp it reeking red
From peasants slaughtered in their shed?
No! wildly while his virtues gleam,
They make his passions darker seem,
And flash along his spirit high,
Like lightning o'er the midnight sky.
While yet a child, — and children know,
Instinctive taught, the friend and foe, —
I shuddered at his brow of gloom,
His shadowy plaid and sable plume;
A maiden grown, I ill could bear
His haughty mien and lordly air:
But, if thou join'st a suitor's claim,
In serious mood, to Roderick's name,
I thrill with anguish! or, if e'er
A Douglas knew the word, with fear.
To change such odious theme were best, —
What think'st thou of our stranger guest?'

XV

'What think I of him? — woe the while
That brought such wanderer to our isle!
Thy father's battle-brand, of yore,
For Tine-man forged by fairy lore,[1]
What time he leagued, no longer foes,
His Border spears with Hotspur's bows,
Did, self-unscabbarded, foreshow [2]
The footstep of a secret foe.
If courtly spy hath harboured here,
What may we for the Douglas fear?
What for this island, deemed of old
Clan-Alpine's last and surest hold?
If neither spy nor foe, I pray
What yet may jealous Roderick say? —
Nay, wave not thy disdainful head!
Bethink thee of the discord dread
That kindled when at Beltane game
Thou ledst the dance with Malcolm Græme;
Still, though thy sire the peace renewed,
Smoulders in Roderick's breast the feud:
Beware! — But hark! what sounds are these?
My dull ears catch no faltering breeze,
No weeping birch nor aspens wake,
Nor breath is dimpling in the lake;

[1] See Note 19. [2] See Note 20.

Still is the canna's hoary beard,
Yet, by my minstrel faith, I heard —
And hark again! some pipe of war
Sends the bold pibroch from afar.'

XVI

Far up the lengthened lake were spied
Four darkening specks upon the tide,
That, slow enlarging on the view,
Four manned and masted barges grew,
And, bearing downwards from Glengyle,
Steered full upon the lonely isle;
The point of Brianchoil they passed,
And, to the windward as they cast,
Against the sun they gave to shine
The bold Sir Roderick's bannered Pine.
Nearer and nearer as they bear,
Spears, pikes, and axes flash in air.
Now might you see the tartans brave,
And plaids and plumage dance and wave:
Now see the bonnets sink and rise,
As his tough oar the rower plies;
See, flashing at each sturdy stroke,
The wave ascending into smoke;
See the proud pipers on the bow,
And mark the gaudy streamers flow

From their loud chanters down, and sweep
The furrowed bosom of the deep,
As, rushing through the lake amain,
They plied the ancient Highland strain.

XVII

Ever, as on they bore, more loud
And louder rung the pibroch proud.
At first the sounds, by distance tame,
Mellowed along the waters came,
And, lingering long by cape and bay,
Wailed every harsher note away,
Then bursting bolder on the ear,
The clan's shrill Gathering they could hear,
Those thrilling sounds that call the might [1]
Of old Clan-Alpine to the fight.
Thick beat the rapid notes, as when
The mustering hundreds shake the glen,
And hurrying at the signal dread,
The battered earth returns their tread.
Then prelude light, of livelier tone,
Expressed their merry marching on,
Ere peal of closing battle rose,
With mingled outcry, shrieks, and blows;
And mimic din of stroke and ward,
As broadsword upon target jarred;

[1] See Note 21.

And groaning pause, ere yet again,
Condensed, the battle yelled amain:
The rapid charge, the rallying shout,
Retreat borne headlong into rout,
And bursts of triumph, to declare
Clan-Alpine's conquest — all were there.
Nor ended thus the strain, but slow
Sunk in a moan prolonged and low,
And changed the conquering clarion swell
For wild lament o'er those that fell.

XVIII

The war-pipes ceased, but lake and hill
Were busy with their echoes still;
And, when they slept, a vocal strain
Bade their hoarse chorus wake again,
While loud a hundred clansmen raise
Their voices in their Chieftain's praise.
Each boatman, bending to his oar,
With measured sweep the burden bore,
In such wild cadence as the breeze
Makes through December's leafless trees.
The chorus first could Allan know,
'Roderick Vich Alpine, ho! iro!'
And near, and nearer as they rowed,
Distinct the martial ditty flowed.

XIX

BOAT SONG

Hail to the Chief who in triumph advances!
Honoured and blessed be the ever-green Pine!
Long may the tree, in his banner that glances,
Flourish, the shelter and grace of our line!
Heaven send it happy dew,
Earth lend it sap anew,
Gaily to bourgeon and broadly to grow,
While every Highland glen
Sends our shout back again,
'Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!' [1]

Ours is no sapling, chance-sown by the fountain,
Blooming at Beltane, in winter to fade;
When the whirlwind has stripped every leaf on the mountain,
The more shall Clan-Alpine exult in her shade.
Moored in the rifted rock,
Proof to the tempest's shock,
Firmer he roots him the ruder it blow;
Menteith and Breadalbane, then,
Echo his praise again,
'Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!'

[1] See Note 22.

XX

Proudly our pibroch has thrilled in Glen Fruin,
And Bannochar's groans to our slogan replied;
Glen-Luss and Ross-dhu, they are smoking in ruin,
And the best of Loch Lomond lie dead on her side.[1]
Widow and Saxon maid
Long shall lament our raid,
Think of Clan-Alpine with fear and with woe;
Lennox and Leven-glen
Shake when they hear again,
'Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!'

Row, vassals, row, for the pride of the Highlands!
Stretch to your oars for the ever-green Pine!
O that the rosebud that graces yon islands
Were wreathed in a garland around him to twine!
O that some seedling gem,
Worthy such noble stem,
Honoured and blessed in their shadow might grow!
Loud should Clan-Alpine then
Ring from her deepmost glen,
'Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!'

XXI

With all her joyful female band
Had Lady Margaret sought the strand.
Loose on the breeze their tresses flew,

[1] See Note 23.

And high their snowy arms they threw,
As echoing back with shrill acclaim,
And chorus wild, the Chieftain's name;
While, prompt to please, with mother's art,
The darling passion of his heart,
The Dame called Ellen to the strand,
To greet her kinsman ere he land:
'Come, loiterer, come! a Douglas thou,
And shun to wreathe a victor's brow?'
Reluctantly and slow, the maid
The unwelcome summoning obeyed,
And when a distant bugle rung,
In the mid-path aside she sprung: —
'List, Allan-bane! From mainland cast
I hear my father's signal blast.
Be ours,' she cried, 'the skiff to guide,
And waft him from the mountain-side.'
Then, like a sunbeam, swift and bright,
She darted to her shallop light,
And, eagerly while Roderick scanned,
For her dear form, his mother's band,
The islet far behind her lay,
And she had landed in the bay.

XXII

Some feelings are to mortals given
With less of earth in them than heaven;

And if there be a human tear
From passion's dross refined and clear,
A tear so limpid and so meek
It would not stain an angel's cheek,
'T is that which pious fathers shed
Upon a duteous daughter's head!
And as the Douglas to his breast
His darling Ellen closely pressed,
Such holy drops her tresses steeped,
Though 't was an hero's eye that weeped.
Nor while on Ellen's faltering tongue
Her filial welcomes crowded hung,
Marked she that fear — affection's proof —
Still held a graceful youth aloof;
No! not till Douglas named his name,
Although the youth was Malcolm Græme.

XXIII

Allan, with wistful look the while,
Marked Roderick landing on the isle;
His master piteously he eyed,
Then gazed upon the Chieftain's pride,
Then dashed with hasty hand away
From his dimmed eye the gathering spray;
And Douglas, as his hand he laid
On Malcolm's shoulder, kindly said:
'Canst thou, young friend, no meaning spy

In my poor follower's glistening eye?
I'll tell thee: — he recalls the day
When in my praise he led the lay
O'er the arched gate of Bothwell proud,
While many a minstrel answered loud,
When Percy's Norman pennon, won
In bloody field, before me shone,
And twice ten knights, the least a name
As mighty as yon Chief may claim,
Gracing my pomp, behind me came.
Yet trust me, Malcolm, not so proud
Was I of all that marshalled crowd,
Though the waned crescent owned my might,
And in my train trooped lord and knight,
Though Blantyre hymned her holiest lays,
And Bothwell's bards flung back my praise,
As when this old man's silent tear,
And this poor maid's affection dear,
A welcome give more kind and true
Than aught my better fortunes knew.
Forgive, my friend, a father's boast, —
O, it out-beggars all I lost!'

XXIV

Delightful praise! — like summer rose,
That brighter in the dew-drop glows,
The bashful maiden's cheek appeared,

For Douglas spoke, and Malcolm heard.
The flash of shame-faced joy to hide,
The hounds, the hawk, her cares divide;
The loved caresses of the maid
The dogs with crouch and whimper paid;
And, at her whistle, on her hand
The falcon took his favourite stand,
Closed his dark wing, relaxed his eye,
Nor, though unhooded, sought to fly.
And, trust, while in such guise she stood,
Like fabled Goddess of the wood,
That if a father's partial thought
O'erweighed her worth and beauty aught,
Well might the lover's judgment fail
To balance with a juster scale;
For with each secret glance he stole,
The fond enthusiast sent his soul.

XXV

Of stature fair, and slender frame,
But firmly knit, was Malcolm Græme.
The belted plaid and tartan hose
Did ne'er more graceful limbs disclose;
His flaxen hair, of sunny hue,
Curled closely round his bonnet blue.
Trained to the chase, his eagle eye
The ptarmigan in snow could spy;

Each pass, by mountain, lake, and heath,
He knew, through Lennox and Menteith;
Vain was the bound of dark-brown doe
When Malcolm bent his sounding bow,
And scarce that doe, though winged with fear,
Outstripped in speed the mountaineer:
Right up Ben Lomond could he press,
And not a sob his toil confess.
His form accorded with a mind
Lively and ardent, frank and kind;
A blither heart, till Ellen came,
Did never love nor sorrow tame;
It danced as lightsome in his breast
As played the feather on his crest.
Yet friends, who nearest knew the youth,
His scorn of wrong, his zeal for truth,
And bards, who saw his features bold
When kindled by the tales of old,
Said, were that youth to manhood grown,
Not long should Roderick Dhu's renown
Be foremost voiced by mountain fame,
But quail to that of Malcolm Græme.

XXVI

Now back they wend their watery way,
And, 'O my sire!' did Ellen say,
'Why urge thy chase so far astray?

And why so late returned? And why' —
The rest was in her speaking eye.
'My child, the chase I follow far,
'T is mimicry of noble war;
And with that gallant pastime reft
Were all of Douglas I have left.
I met young Malcolm as I strayed
Far eastward, in Glenfinlas' shade;
Nor strayed I safe, for all around
Hunters and horsemen scoured the ground.
This youth, though still a royal ward,
Risked life and land to be my guard,
And through the passes of the wood
Guided my steps, not unpursued;
And Roderick shall his welcome make,
Despite old spleen, for Douglas' sake.
Then must he seek Strath-Endrick glen,
Nor peril aught for me again.'

XXVII

Sir Roderick, who to meet them came,
Reddened at sight of Malcolm Græme,
Yet, not in action, word, or eye,
Failed aught in hospitality.
In talk and sport they whiled away
The morning of that summer day;
But at high noon a courier light

Held secret parley with the knight,
Whose moody aspect soon declared
That evil were the news he heard.
Deep thought seemed toiling in his head;
Yet was the evening banquet made
Ere he assembled round the flame
His mother, Douglas, and the Græme,
And Ellen too; then cast around
His eyes, then fixed them on the ground,
As studying phrase that might avail
Best to convey unpleasant tale.
Long with his dagger's hilt he played,
Then raised his haughty brow, and said: —

XXVIII

'Short be my speech; — nor time affords,
Nor my plain temper, glozing words.
Kinsman and father, — if such name
Douglas vouchsafe to Roderick's claim;
Mine honoured mother; — Ellen, — why,
My cousin, turn away thine eye?
And Græme, in whom I hope to know
Full soon a noble friend or foe,
When age shall give thee thy command,
And leading in thy native land, —
List all! — The King's vindictive pride
Boasts to have tamed the Border-side,[1]

[1] See Note 24.

Where chiefs, with hound and hawk who came
To share their monarch's sylvan game,
Themselves in bloody toils were snared,
And when the banquet they prepared,
And wide their loyal portals flung,
O'er their own gateway struggling hung.
Loud cries their blood from Meggat's mead,
From Yarrow braes and banks of Tweed,
Where the lone streams of Ettrick glide,
And from the silver Teviot's side;
The dales, where martial clans did ride,
Are now one sheep-walk, waste and wide.
This tyrant of the Scottish throne,
So faithless and so ruthless known,
Now hither comes; his end the same,
The same pretext of sylvan game.
What grace for Highland Chiefs, judge ye
By fate of Border chivalry.[1]
Yet more; amid Glenfinlas' green,
Douglas, thy stately form was seen.
This by espial sure I know:
Your counsel in the streight I show.'

XXIX

Ellen and Margaret fearfully
Sought comfort in each other's eye,
Then turned their ghastly look, each one,

[1] See Note 25.

This to her sire, that to her son.
The hasty colour went and came
In the bold cheek of Malcolm Græme,
But from his glance it well appeared
'T was but for Ellen that he feared;
While, sorrowful, but undismayed,
The Douglas thus his counsel said:
'Brave Roderick, though the tempest roar,
It may but thunder and pass o'er;
Nor will I here remain an hour,
To draw the lightning on thy bower;
For well thou know'st, at this grey head
The royal bolt were fiercest sped.
For thee, who, at thy King's command,
Canst aid him with a gallant band,
Submission, homage, humbled pride,
Shall turn the Monarch's wrath aside.
Poor remnants of the Bleeding Heart,
Ellen and I will seek apart
The refuge of some forest cell;
There, like the hunted quarry, dwell,
Till on the mountain and the moor
The stern pursuit be passed and o'er.'

XXX

'No, by mine honour,' Roderick said,
'So help me Heaven, and my good blade!

No, never! Blasted be yon Pine,
My father's ancient crest and mine,
If from its shade in danger part
The lineage of the Bleeding Heart!
Hear my blunt speech: grant me this maid
To wife, thy counsel to mine aid;
To Douglas, leagued with Roderick Dhu,
Will friends and allies flock enow;
Like cause of doubt, distrust, and grief,
Will bind to us each Western Chief.
When the loud pipes my bridal tell,
The Links of Forth shall hear the knell,
The guards shall start in Stirling's porch;
And when I light the nuptial torch,
A thousand villages in flames
Shall scare the slumbers of King James! —
Nay, Ellen, blench not thus away,
And, mother, cease these signs, I pray;
I meant not all my heat might say. —
Small need of inroad or of fight,
When the sage Douglas may unite
Each mountain clan in friendly band,
To guard the passes of their land,
Till the foiled King from pathless glen
Shall bootless turn him home again.'

XXXI

There are who have, at midnight hour,
In slumber scaled a dizzy tower,
And, on the verge that beetled o'er
The ocean tide's incessant roar,
Dreamed calmly out their dangerous dream,
Till wakened by the morning beam;
When, dazzled by the eastern glow,
Such startler cast his glance below,
And saw unmeasured depth around,
And heard unintermitted sound,
And thought the battled fence so frail,
It waved like cobweb in the gale; —
Amid his senses' giddy wheel,
Did he not desperate impulse feel,
Headlong to plunge himself below,
And meet the worst his fears foreshow?
Thus Ellen, dizzy and astound,
As sudden ruin yawned around,
By crossing terrors wildly tossed,
Still for the Douglas fearing most,
Could scarce the desperate thought withstand,
To buy his safety with her hand.

XXXII

Such purpose dread could Malcolm spy
In Ellen's quivering lip and eye,
And eager rose to speak, — but ere
His tongue could hurry forth his fear,
Had Douglas marked the hectic strife,
Where death seemed combating with life;
For to her cheek, in feverish flood,
One instant rushed the throbbing blood,
Then ebbing back, with sudden sway,
Left its domain as wan as clay.
'Roderick, enough! enough!' he cried,
'My daughter cannot be thy bride;
Not that the blush to wooer dear,
Nor paleness that of maiden fear.
It may not be, — forgive her, Chief,
Nor hazard aught for our relief.
Against his sovereign, Douglas ne'er
Will level a rebellious spear.
'T was I that taught his youthful hand
To rein a steed and wield a brand;
I see him yet, the princely boy!
Not Ellen more my pride and joy;
I love him still, despite my wrongs
By hasty wrath and slanderous tongues.
O, seek the grace you well may find,
Without a cause to mine combined!'

XXXIII

Twice through the hall the Chieftain strode;
The waving of his tartans broad,
And darkened brow, where wounded pride
With ire and disappointment vied,
Seemed, by the torch's gloomy light,
Like the ill Demon of the night,
Stooping his pinions' shadowy sway
Upon the nighted pilgrim's way:
But, unrequited Love! thy dart
Plunged deepest its envenomed smart,
And Roderick, with thine anguish stung,
At length the hand of Douglas wrung,
While eyes that mocked at tears before
With bitter drops were running o'er.
The death-pangs of long-cherished hope
Scarce in that ample breast had scope,
But, struggling with his spirit proud,
Convulsive heaved its checkered shroud,
While every sob — so mute were all —
Was heard distinctly through the hall.
The son's despair, the mother's look,
Ill might the gentle Ellen brook;
She rose, and to her side there came,
To aid her parting steps, the Græme.

XXXIV

Then Roderick from the Douglas broke —
As flashes flame through sable smoke,
Kindling its wreaths, long, dark, and low,
To one broad blaze of ruddy glow,
So the deep anguish of despair
Burst, in fierce jealousy, to air.
With stalwart grasp his hand he laid
On Malcolm's breast and belted plaid:
'Back, beardless boy!' he sternly said,
'Back, minion! holdst thou thus at nought
The lesson I so lately taught?
This roof, the Douglas, and that maid,
Thank thou for punishment delayed.'
Eager as greyhound on his game,
Fiercely with Roderick grappled Græme.
'Perish my name, if aught afford
Its chieftain safety save his sword!'
Thus as they strove their desperate hand
Griped to the dagger or the brand,
And death had been — but Douglas rose,
And thrust between the struggling foes
His giant strength: — 'Chieftains, forego!
I hold the first who strikes my foe.[1]
Madmen, forbear your frantic jar!

[1] See Note 26.

What! is the Douglas fallen so far,
His daughter's hand is deemed the spoil
Of such dishonourable broil?'
Sullen and slowly they unclasp,
As struck with shame, their desperate grasp,
And each upon his rival glared,
With foot advanced and blade half bared.

XXXV

Ere yet the brands aloft were flung,
Margaret on Roderick's mantle hung,
And Malcolm heard his Ellen's scream,
As faltered through terrific dream.
Then Roderick plunged in sheath his sword,
And veiled his wrath in scornful word:
'Rest safe till morning; pity 't were
Such cheek should feel the midnight air![1]
Then mayst thou to James Stuart tell,
Roderick will keep the lake and fell,
Nor lackey with his freeborn clan
The pageant pomp of earthly man.
More would he of Clan-Alpine know,
Thou canst our strength and passes show. —
Malise, what ho!' — his henchman[2] came:
'Give our safe-conduct to the Græme.'
Young Malcolm answered, calm and bold:

[1] See Note 27. [2] See Note 28.

'Fear nothing for thy favourite hold;
The spot an angel deigned to grace
Is blessed, though robbers haunt the place.
Thy churlish courtesy for those
Reserve, who fear to be thy foes.
As safe to me the mountain way
At midnight as in blaze of day,
Though with his boldest at his back
Even Roderick Dhu beset the track.
Brave Douglas, — lovely Ellen, — nay,
Nought here of parting will I say.
Earth does not hold a lonesome glen
So secret but we meet again, —
Chieftain! we too shall find an hour,' —
He said, and left the sylvan bower.

XXXVI

Old Allan followed to the strand —
Such was the Douglas's command —
And anxious told, how, on the morn,
The stern Sir Roderick deep had sworn,
The Fiery Cross should circle o'er
Dale, glen, and valley, down and moor.
Much were the peril to the Græme
From those who to the signal came;
Far up the lake 't were safest land,
Himself would row him to the strand.

He gave his counsel to the wind,
While Malcolm did, unheeding, bind,
Round dirk and pouch and broadsword rolled,
His ample plaid in tightened fold,
And stripped his limbs to such array
As best might suit the watery way, —

XXXVII

Then spoke abrupt: 'Farewell to thee,
Pattern of old fidelity!'
The Minstrel's hand he kindly pressed, —
'O, could I point a place of rest!
My sovereign holds in ward my land,
My uncle leads my vassal band;
To tame his foes, his friends to aid,
Poor Malcolm has but heart and blade.
Yet, if there be one faithful Græme
Who loves the chieftain of his name,
Not long shall honoured Douglas dwell
Like hunted stag in mountain cell;
Nor, ere yon pride-swollen robber dare, —
I may not give the rest to air!
Tell Roderick Dhu I owed him nought,
Not the poor service of a boat,
To waft me to yon mountain-side.'
Then plunged he in the flashing tide.
Bold o'er the flood his head he bore,

And stoutly steered him from the shore;
And Allan strained his anxious eye,
Far mid the lake his form to spy,
Darkening across each puny wave,
To which the moon her silver gave.
Fast as the cormorant could skim,
The swimmer plied each active limb;
Then landing in the moonlight dell,
Loud shouted of his weal to tell.
The Minstrel heard the far halloo,
And joyful from the shore withdrew.

CANTO THIRD

THE GATHERING

I

TIME rolls his ceaseless course. The race of yore,
Who danced our infancy upon their knee,
And told our marvelling boyhood legends store
Of their strange ventures happed by land or sea,
How are they blotted from the things that be!
How few, all weak and withered of their force,
Wait on the verge of dark eternity,
Like stranded wrecks, the tide returning hoarse,
To sweep them from our sight! Time rolls his ceaseless course.

Yet live there still who can remember well,
How, when a mountain chief his bugle blew,
Both field and forest, dingle, cliff, and dell,
And solitary heath, the signal knew;
And fast the faithful clan around him drew,
What time the warning note was keenly wound,
What time aloft their kindred banner flew,
While clamorous war-pipes yelled the gathering sound,
And while the Fiery Cross glanced, like a meteor, round.[1]

[1] See Note 29.

II

The Summer dawn's reflected hue
To purple changed Loch Katrine blue;
Mildly and soft the western breeze
Just kissed the lake, just stirred the trees,
And the pleased lake, like maiden coy,
Trembled but dimpled not for joy:
The mountain-shadows on her breast
Were neither broken nor at rest;
In bright uncertainty they lie,
Like future joys to Fancy's eye.
The water-lily to the light
Her chalice reared of silver bright;
The doe awoke, and to the lawn,
Begemmed with dew-drops, led her fawn;
The grey mist left the mountain-side,
The torrent showed its glistening pride;
Invisible in fleckèd sky
The lark sent down her revelry;
The blackbird and the speckled thrush
Good-morrow gave from brake and bush;
In answer cooed the cushat dove
Her notes of peace and rest and love.

III

No thought of peace, no thought of rest,
Assuaged the storm in Roderick's breast.

With sheathèd broadsword in his hand,
Abrupt he paced the islet strand,
And eyed the rising sun, and laid
His hand on his impatient blade.
Beneath a rock, his vassals' care
Was prompt the ritual to prepare,
With deep and deathful meaning fraught;
For such Antiquity had taught
Was preface meet, ere yet abroad
The Cross of Fire should take its road.
The shrinking band stood oft aghast
At the impatient glance he cast; —
Such glance the mountain eagle threw,
As, from the cliffs of Benvenue,
She spread her dark sails on the wind,
And, high in middle heaven reclined,
With her broad shadow on the lake,
Silenced the warblers of the brake.

IV

A heap of withered boughs was piled,
Of juniper and rowan wild,
Mingled with shivers from the oak,
Rent by the lightning's recent stroke.
Brian the Hermit by it stood,
Barefooted, in his frock and hood.
His grizzled beard and matted hair

Obscured a visage of despair;
His naked arms and legs, seamed o'er,
The scars of frantic penance bore.
That monk, of savage form and face,[1]
The impending danger of his race
Had drawn from deepest solitude,
Far in Benharrow's bosom rude.
Not his the mien of Christian priest,
But Druid's, from the grave released,
Whose hardened heart and eye might brook
On human sacrifice to look;
And much, 't was said, of heathen lore
Mixed in the charms he muttered o'er.
The hallowed creed gave only worse
And deadlier emphasis of curse.
No peasant sought that Hermit's prayer,
His cave the pilgrim shunned with care;
The eager huntsman knew his bound,
And in mid chase called off his hound;
Or if, in lonely glen or strath,
The desert-dweller met his path,
He prayed, and signed the cross between,
While terror took devotion's mien.

V

Of Brian's birth strange tales were told.[2]
His mother watched a midnight fold,

[1] See Note 30. [2] See Note 31.

Built deep within a dreary glen,
Where scattered lay the bones of men
In some forgotten battle slain,
And bleached by drifting wind and rain.
It might have tamed a warrior's heart
To view such mockery of his art!
The knot-grass fettered there the hand
Which once could burst an iron band;
Beneath the broad and ample bone,
That bucklered heart to fear unknown,
A feeble and a timorous guest,
The fieldfare framed her lowly nest;
There the slow blindworm left his slime
On the fleet limbs that mocked at time;
And there, too, lay the leader's skull,
Still wreathed with chaplet, flushed and full,
For heath-bell with her purple bloom
Supplied the bonnet and the plume.
All night, in this sad glen, the maid
Sat shrouded in her mantle's shade:
She said no shepherd sought her side,
No hunter's hand her snood untied,
Yet ne'er again to braid her hair
The virgin snood did Alice wear;[1]
Gone was her maiden glee and sport,
Her maiden girdle all too short,

[1] See Note 32.

Nor sought she, from that fatal night,
Or holy church or blessed rite,
But locked her secret in her breast,
And died in travail, unconfessed.

VI

Alone, among his young compeers,
Was Brian from his infant years;
A moody and heart-broken boy,
Estranged from sympathy and joy,
Bearing each taunt which careless tongue
On his mysterious lineage flung.
Whole nights he spent by moonlight pale,
To wood and stream his hap to wail,
Till, frantic, he as truth received
What of his birth the crowd believed,
And sought, in mist and meteor fire,
To meet and know his Phantom Sire!
In vain, to soothe his wayward fate,
The cloister oped her pitying gate;
In vain the learning of the age
Unclasped the sable-lettered page;
Even in its treasures he could find
Food for the fever of his mind.
Eager he read whatever tells
Of magic, cabala, and spells,
And every dark pursuit allied

To curious and presumptuous pride;
Till with fired brain and nerves o'erstrung,
And heart with mystic horrors wrung,
Desperate he sought Benharrow's den,
And hid him from the haunts of men.

VII

The desert gave him visions wild,[1]
Such as might suit the spectre's child.
Where with black cliffs the torrents toil,
He watched the wheeling eddies boil,
Till from their foam his dazzled eyes
Beheld the River Demon rise:
The mountain mist took form and limb
Of noontide hag or goblin grim;
The midnight wind came wild and dread,
Swelled with the voices of the dead;
Far on the future battle-heath
His eye beheld the ranks of death;
Thus the lone Seer, from mankind hurled,
Shaped forth a disembodied world.
One lingering sympathy of mind
Still bound him to the mortal kind;
The only parent he could claim
Of ancient Alpine's lineage came.
Late had he heard, in prophet's dream,

[1] See Note 33.

The fatal Ben-Shie's boding scream;[1]
Sounds, too, had come in midnight blast
Of charging steeds, careering fast
Along Benharrow's shingly side,
Where mortal horseman ne'er might ride;[2]
The thunderbolt had split the pine, —
All augured ill to Alpine's line.
He girt his loins, and came to show
The signals of impending woe,
And now stood prompt to bless or ban,
As bade the Chieftain of his clan.

VIII

'T was all prepared; — and from the rock
A goat, the patriarch of the flock,
Before the kindling pile was laid,
And pierced by Roderick's ready blade.
Patient the sickening victim eyed
The life-blood ebb in crimson tide
Down his clogged beard and shaggy limb,
Till darkness glazed his eyeballs dim.
The grisly priest, with murmuring prayer,
A slender crosslet framed with care,
A cubit's length in measure due;
The shaft and limbs were rods of yew,
Whose parents in Inch-Cailliach wave[3]

[1] See Note 34. [2] See Note 35. [3] See Note 36.

Their shadows o'er Clan-Alpine's grave,
And, answering Lomond's breezes deep,
Soothe many a chieftain's endless sleep.
The Cross thus formed he held on high,
With wasted hand and haggard eye,
And strange and mingled feelings woke,
While his anathema he spoke: —

IX

'Woe to the clansman who shall view
This symbol of sepulchral yew,
Forgetful that its branches grew
Where weep the heavens their holiest dew
On Alpine's dwelling low!
Deserter of his Chieftain's trust,
He ne'er shall mingle with their dust,
But, from his sires and kindred thrust,
Each clansman's execration just
Shall doom him wrath and woe.'
He paused; — the word the vassals took,
With forward step and fiery look,
On high their naked brands they shook,
Their clattering targets wildly strook;
And first in murmur low,
Then, like the billow in his course,
That far to seaward finds his source,
And flings to shore his mustered force,

Burst with loud roar their answer hoarse,
'Woe to the traitor, woe!'
Ben-an's grey scalp the accents knew,
The joyous wolf from covert drew,
The exulting eagle screamed afar, —
They knew the voice of Alpine's war.

X

The shout was hushed on lake and fell,
The Monk resumed his muttered spell:
Dismal and low its accents came,
The while he scathed the Cross with flame;
And the few words that reached the air,
Although the holiest name was there,
Had more of blasphemy than prayer.
But when he shook above the crowd
Its kindled points, he spoke aloud: —
'Woe to the wretch who fails to rear
At this dread sign the ready spear!
For, as the flames this symbol sear,
His home, the refuge of his fear,
A kindred fate shall know;
Far o'er its roof the volumed flame
Clan-Alpine's vengeance shall proclaim,
While maids and matrons on his name
Shall call down wretchedness and shame,
And infamy and woe.'

Then rose the cry of females, shrill
As goshawk's whistle on the hill,
Denouncing misery and ill,
Mingled with childhood's babbling trill
Of curses stammered slow;
Answering with imprecation dread,
'Sunk be his home in embers red!
And cursed be the meanest shed
That e'er shall hide the houseless head
We doom to want and woe!'
A sharp and shrieking echo gave,
Coir-Uriskin, thy goblin cave!
And the grey pass where birches wave
On Beala-nam-bo.

XI

Then deeper paused the priest anew,
And hard his labouring breath he drew,
While, with set teeth and clenchèd hand,
And eyes that glowed like fiery brand,
He meditated curse more dread,
And deadlier, on the clansman's head
Who, summoned to his chieftain's aid,
The signal saw and disobeyed.
The crosslet's points of sparkling wood
He quenched among the bubbling blood,
And, as again the sign he reared,

Hollow and hoarse his voice was heard:
'When flits this Cross from man to man,
Vich-Alpine's summons to his clan,
Burst be the ear that fails to heed!
Palsied the foot that shuns to speed!
May ravens tear the careless eyes,
Wolves make the coward heart their prize!
As sinks that blood-stream in the earth,
So may his heart's-blood drench his hearth!
As dies in hissing gore the spark,
Quench thou his light, Destruction dark!
And be the grace to him denied,
Bought by this sign to all beside!'
He ceased; no echo gave again
The murmur of the deep Amen.

XII

Then Roderick with impatient look
From Brian's hand the symbol took:
'Speed, Malise, speed!' he said, and gave
The crosslet to his henchman brave.
'The muster-place be Lanrick mead —
Instant the time — speed, Malise, speed!'
Like heath-bird, when the hawks pursue,
A barge across Loch Katrine flew:
High stood the henchman on the prow;
So rapidly the barge-men row,

The bubbles, where they launched the boat,
Were all unbroken and afloat,
Dancing in foam and ripple still,
When it had neared the mainland hill;
And from the silver beach's side
Still was the prow three fathom wide,
When lightly bounded to the land
The messenger of blood and brand.

XIII

Speed, Malise, speed! the dun deer's hide[1]
On fleeter foot was never tied.
Speed, Malise, speed! such cause of haste
Thine active sinews never braced.
Bend 'gainst the steepy hill thy breast,
Burst down like torrent from its crest;
With short and springing footstep pass
The trembling bog and false morass;
Across the brook like roebuck bound,
And thread the brake like questing hound;
The crag is high, the scaur is deep,
Yet shrink not from the desperate leap:
Parched are thy burning lips and brow,
Yet by the fountain pause not now;
Herald of battle, fate, and fear,
Stretch onward in thy fleet career!

[1] See Note 37.

The wounded hind thou track'st not now,
Pursuest not maid through greenwood bough,
Nor pliest thou now thy flying pace
With rivals in the mountain race;
But danger, death, and warrior deed
Are in thy course — speed, Malise, speed!

XIV

Fast as the fatal symbol flies,
In arms the huts and hamlets rise;
From winding glen, from upland brown,
They poured each hardy tenant down.
Nor slacked the messenger his pace;
He showed the sign, he named the place,
And, pressing forward like the wind,
Left clamour and surprise behind.
The fisherman forsook the strand,
The swarthy smith took dirk and brand;
With changèd cheer, the mower blithe
Left in the half-cut swath his scythe;
The herds without a keeper strayed,
The plough was in mid-furrow stayed,
The falconer tossed his hawk away,
The hunter left the stag at bay;
Prompt at the signal of alarms,
Each son of Alpine rushed to arms;
So swept the tumult and affray

Along the margin of Achray.
Alas, thou lovely lake! that e'er
Thy banks should echo sounds of fear!
The rocks, the bosky thickets, sleep
So stilly on thy bosom deep,
The lark's blithe carol from the cloud
Seems for the scene too gaily loud.

XV

Speed, Malise, speed! The lake is past,
Duncraggan's huts appear at last,
And peep, like moss-grown rocks, half seen,
Half hidden in the copse so green;
There mayst thou rest, thy labour done,
Their lord shall speed the signal on. —
As stoops the hawk upon his prey,
The henchman shot him down the way.
What woful accents load the gale?
The funeral yell, the female wail!
A gallant hunter's sport is o'er,
A valiant warrior fights no more.
Who, in the battle or the chase,
At Roderick's side shall fill his place! —
Within the hall, where torch's ray
Supplies the excluded beams of day,
Lies Duncan on his lowly bier,
And o'er him streams his widow's tear.

His stripling son stands mournful by,
His youngest weeps, but knows not why;
The village maids and matrons round
The dismal coronach[1] resound.

XVI

CORONACH

He is gone on the mountain,
  He is lost to the forest,
Like a summer-dried fountain,
  When our need was the sorest.
The font, reappearing,
  From the rain-drops shall borrow,
But to us comes no cheering,
  To Duncan no morrow!

The hand of the reaper
  Takes the ears that are hoary,
But the voice of the weeper
  Wails manhood in glory.
The autumn winds rushing
  Waft the leaves that are searest,
But our flower was in flushing,
  When blighting was nearest.

Fleet foot on the correi,
  Sage counsel in cumber,

[1] See Note 38.

Red hand in the foray,
How sound is thy slumber!
Like the dew on the mountain,
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
Thou art gone, and forever!

XVII

See Stumah, who, the bier beside,
His master's corpse with wonder eyed,
Poor Stumah! whom his least halloo
Could send like lightning o'er the dew,
Bristles his crest, and points his ears,
As if some stranger step he hears.
'T is not a mourner's muffled tread,
Who comes to sorrow o'er the dead,
But headlong haste or deadly fear
Urge the precipitate career.
All stand aghast: — unheeding all,
The henchman bursts into the hall;
Before the dead man's bier he stood,
Held forth the Cross besmeared with blood;
'The muster-place is Lanrick mead:
Speed forth the signal! clansmen, speed!'

XVIII

Angus, the heir of Duncan's line,
Sprung forth and seized the fatal sign.

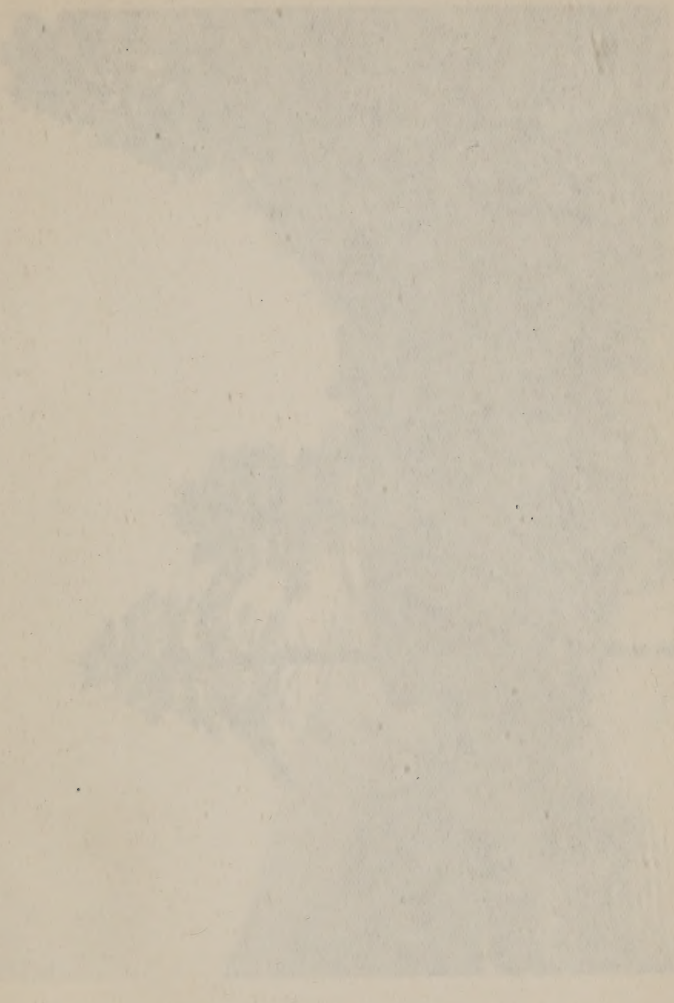
In haste the stripling to his side
His father's dirk and broadsword tied;
But when he saw his mother's eye
Watch him in speechless agony,
Back to her opened arms he flew,
Pressed on her lips a fond adieu, —
'Alas!' she sobbed, — 'and yet be gone,
And speed thee forth, like Duncan's son!'
One look he cast upon the bier,
Dashed from his eye the gathering tear,
Breathed deep to clear his labouring breast,
And tossed aloft his bonnet crest,
Then, like the high-bred colt when, freed,
First he essays his fire and speed,
He vanished, and o'er moor and moss
Sped forward with the Fiery Cross.
Suspended was the widow's tear
While yet his footsteps she could hear;
And when she marked the henchman's eye
Wet with unwonted sympathy,
'Kinsman,' she said, 'his race is run
That should have sped thine errand on;
The oak has fallen, — the sapling bough
Is all Duncraggan's shelter now.
Yet trust I well, his duty done,
The orphan's God will guard my son. —
And you, in many a danger true,

At Duncan's hest your blades that drew,
To arms, and guard that orphan's head!
Let babes and women wail the dead.'
Then weapon-clang and martial call
Resounded through the funeral hall,
While from the walls the attendant band
Snatched sword and targe with hurried hand;
And short and flitting energy
Glanced from the mourner's sunken eye,
As if the sounds to warrior dear
Might rouse her Duncan from his bier.
But faded soon that borrowed force;
Grief claimed his right, and tears their course.

XIX

Benledi saw the Cross of Fire,
It glanced like lightning up Strath-Ire.[1]
O'er dale and hill the summons flew,
Nor rest nor pause young Angus knew;
The tear that gathered in his eye
He left the mountain-breeze to dry;
Until, where Teith's young waters roll
Betwixt him and a wooded knoll
That graced the sable strath with green,
The chapel of Saint Bride was seen.
Swoln was the stream, remote the bridge,

[1] See Note 39.



The Chapel of Saint Bride

But Angus paused not on the edge;
Though the dark waves danced dizzily,
Though reeled his sympathetic eye,
He dashed amid the torrent's roar;
His right hand high the crosslet bore,
His left the pole-axe grasped, to guide
And stay his footing in the tide.
He stumbled twice, — the foam splashed high,
With hoarser swell the stream raced by;
And had he fallen, — forever there,
Farewell Duncraggan's orphan heir!
But still, as if in parting life,
Firmer he grasped the Cross of strife,
Until the opposing bank he gained,
And up the chapel pathway strained.

XX

A blithesome rout that morning-tide
Had sought the chapel of Saint Bride.
Her troth Tombea's Mary gave
To Norman, heir of Armandave,
And, issuing from the Gothic arch,
The bridal now resumed their march.
In rude but glad procession came
Bonneted sire and coif-clad dame;
And plaided youth, with jest and jeer,
Which snooded maiden would not hear;

And children, that, unwitting why,
Lent the gay shout their shrilly cry;
And minstrels, that in measures vied
Before the young and bonny bride,
Whose downcast eye and cheek disclose
The tear and blush of morning rose.
With virgin step and bashful hand
She held the kerchief's snowy band.
The gallant bridegroom by her side
Beheld his prize with victor's pride,
And the glad mother in her ear
Was closely whispering word of cheer.

XXI

Who meets them at the churchyard gate?
The messenger of fear and fate!
Haste in his hurried accent lies,
And grief is swimming in his eyes.
All dripping from the recent flood,
Panting and travel-soiled he stood,
The fatal sign of fire and sword
Held forth, and spoke the appointed word:
'The muster-place is Lanrick mead;
Speed forth the signal! Norman, speed!'
And must he change so soon the hand
Just linked to his by holy band,
For the fell Cross of blood and brand?

And must the day so blithe that rose,
And promised rapture in the close,
Before its setting hour, divide
The bridegroom from the plighted bride?
O fatal doom! — it must! it must!
Clan-Alpine's cause, her Chieftain's trust,
Her summons dread, brook no delay;
Stretch to the race, — away! away!

XXII

Yet slow he laid his plaid aside,
And lingering eyed his lovely bride,
Until he saw the starting tear
Speak woe he might not stop to cheer;
Then, trusting not a second look,
In haste he sped him up the brook,
Nor backward glanced till on the heath
Where Lubnaig's lake supplies the Teith.
What in the racer's bosom stirred?
The sickening pang of hope deferred,
And memory with a torturing train
Of all his morning visions vain.
Mingled with love's impatience, came
The manly thirst for martial fame;
The stormy joy of mountaineers
Ere yet they rush upon the spears;
And zeal for Clan and Chieftain burning,

And hope, from well-fought field returning,
With war's red honours on his crest,
To clasp his Mary to his breast.
Stung by such thoughts, o'er bank and brae,
Like fire from flint he glanced away,
While high resolve and feeling strong
Burst into voluntary song.

XXIII

SONG

The heath this night must be my bed,
The bracken curtain for my head,
My lullaby the warder's tread,
  Far, far, from love and thee, Mary;
To-morrow eve, more stilly laid,
My couch may be my bloody plaid,
My vesper song thy wail, sweet maid!
  It will not waken me, Mary!

I may not, dare not, fancy now
The grief that clouds thy lovely brow,
I dare not think upon thy vow,
  And all it promised me, Mary.
No fond regret must Norman know;
When bursts Clan-Alpine on the foe,
His heart must be like bended bow,
  His foot like arrow free, Mary.

A time will come with feeling fraught,
For, if I fall in battle fought,
Thy hapless lover's dying thought
Shall be a thought on thee, Mary.
And if returned from conquered foes,
How blithely will the evening close,
How sweet the linnet sing repose,
To my young bride and me, Mary!

XXIV

Not faster o'er thy heathery braes,
Balquidder, speeds the midnight blaze,[1]
Rushing in conflagration strong
Thy deep ravines and dells along,
Wrapping thy cliffs in purple glow,
And reddening the dark lakes below;
Nor faster speeds it, nor so far,
As o'er thy heaths the voice of war.
The signal roused to martial coil
The sullen margin of Loch Voil,
Waked still Loch Doine, and to the source
Alarmed, Balvaig, thy swampy course;
Thence southward turned its rapid road
Adown Strath-Gartney's valley broad,
Till rose in arms each man might claim
A portion in Clan-Alpine's name,

[1] See Note 40.

From the grey sire, whose trembling hand
Could hardly buckle on his brand,
To the raw boy, whose shaft and bow
Were yet scarce terror to the crow.
Each valley, each sequestered glen,
Mustered its little horde of men,
That met as torrents from the height
In highland dales their streams unite,
Still gathering, as they pour along,
A voice more loud, a tide more strong,
Till at the rendezvous they stood
By hundreds prompt for blows and blood,
Each trained to arms since life began,
Owning no tie but to his clan,
No oath but by his chieftain's hand,
No law but Roderick Dhu's command.[1]

XXV

That summer morn had Roderick Dhu
Surveyed the skirts of Benvenue,
And sent his scouts o'er hill and heath,
To view the frontiers of Menteith.
All backward came with news of truce;
Still lay each martial Græme and Bruce,
In Rednock courts no horsemen wait,
No banner waved on Cardross gate,

[1] See Note 41.

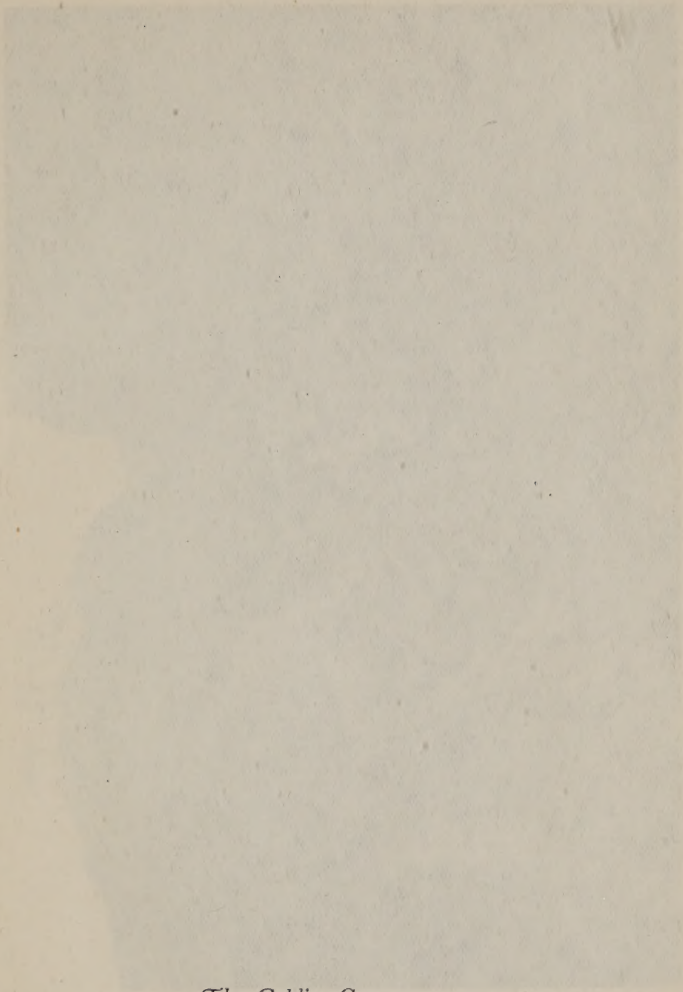
On Duchray's towers no beacon shone,
Nor scared the herons from Loch Con;
All seemed at peace. — Now wot ye why
The Chieftain with such anxious eye,
Ere to the muster he repair,
This western frontier scanned with care?
In Benvenue's most darksome cleft,
A fair though cruel pledge was left;
For Douglas, to his promise true,
That morning from the isle withdrew,
And in a deep sequestered dell
Had sought a low and lonely cell.
By many a bard in Celtic tongue
Has Coir-nan-Ursikin been sung;[1]
A softer name the Saxons gave,
And called the grot the Goblin Cave.

XXVI

It was a wild and strange retreat,
As e'er was trod by outlaw's feet.
The dell, upon the mountain's crest,
Yawned like a gash on warrior's breast;
Its trench had stayed full many a rock,
Hurled by primeval earthquake shock
From Benvenue's grey summit wild,
And here, in random ruin piled,

[1] See Note 42.

They frowned incumbent o'er the spot,
And formed the rugged sylvan grot.
The oak and birch with mingled shade
At noontide there a twilight made,
Unless when short and sudden shone
Some straggling beam on cliff or stone,
With such a glimpse as prophet's eye
Gains on thy depth, Futurity.
No murmur waked the solemn still,
Save tinkling of a fountain rill;
But when the wind chafed with the lake,
A sullen sound would upward break,
With dashing hollow voice, that spoke
The incessant war of wave and rock.
Suspended cliffs with hideous sway
Seemed nodding o'er the cavern grey.
From such a den the wolf had sprung,
In such the wild-cat leaves her young;
Yet Douglas and his daughter fair
Sought for a space their safety there.
Grey Superstition's whisper dread
Debarred the spot to vulgar tread;
For there, she said, did fays resort,
And satyrs hold their sylvan court,
By moonlight tread their mystic maze,
And blast the rash beholder's gaze.



The Goblin Cave

XXVII

Now eve, with western shadows long,
Floated on Katrine bright and strong,
When Roderick with a chosen few
Repassed the heights of Benvenue.
Above the Goblin Cave they go,
Through the wild pass of Beal-nam-bo; [1]
The prompt retainers speed before,
To launch the shallop from the shore,
For 'cross Loch Katrine lies his way
To view the passes of Achray,
And place his clansmen in array.
Yet lags the Chief in musing mind,
Unwonted sight, his men behind.
A single page, to bear his sword,
Alone attended on his lord; [2]
The rest their way through thickets break,
And soon await him by the lake.
It was a fair and gallant sight,
To view them from the neighbouring height,
By the low-levelled sunbeam's light!
For strength and stature, from the clan
Each warrior was a chosen man,
As even afar might well be seen,
By their proud step and martial mien.

[1] See Note 43. [2] See Note 44.

Their feathers dance, their tartans float,
Their targets gleam, as by the boat
A wild and warlike group they stand,
That well became such mountain-strand.

XXVIII

Their Chief with step reluctant still
Was lingering on the craggy hill,
Hard by where turned apart the road
To Douglas's obscure abode.
It was but with that dawning morn
That Roderick Dhu had proudly sworn
To drown his love in war's wild roar,
Nor think of Ellen Douglas more;
But he who stems a stream with sand,
And fetters flame with flaxen band,
Has yet a harder task to prove, —
By firm resolve to conquer love!
Eve finds the Chief, like restless ghost,
Still hovering near his treasure lost;
For though his haughty heart deny
A parting meeting to his eye,
Still fondly strains his anxious ear
The accents of her voice to hear,
And inly did he curse the breeze
That waked to sound the rustling trees.
But hark! what mingles in the strain?

It is the harp of Allan-bane,
That wakes its measure slow and high,
Attuned to sacred minstrelsy.
What melting voice attends the strings?
'T is Ellen, or an angel, sings.

XXIX

HYMN TO THE VIRGIN

Ave Maria! maiden mild!
Listen to a maiden's prayer!
Thou canst hear though from the wild,
Thou canst save amid despair.
Safe may we sleep beneath thy care,
Though banished, outcast, and reviled —
Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer;
Mother, hear a suppliant child!
Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! undefiled!
The flinty couch we now must share
Shall seem with down of eider piled,
If thy protection hover there.
The murky cavern's heavy air
Shall breathe of balm if thou hast smiled;
Then, Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer,
Mother, list a suppliant child!
Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! stainless styled!
Foul demons of the earth and air,
From this their wonted haunt exiled,
Shall flee before thy presence fair.
We bow us to our lot of care,
Beneath thy guidance reconciled:
Hear for a maid a maiden's prayer,
And for a father hear a child!
Ave Maria!

XXX

Died on the harp the closing hymn, —
Unmoved in attitude and limb,
As listening still, Clan-Alpine's lord
Stood leaning on his heavy sword,
Until the page with humble sign
Twice pointed to the sun's decline.
Then while his plaid he round him cast,
'It is the last time — 't is the last,'
He muttered thrice, — 'the last time e'er
That angel-voice shall Roderick hear!'
It was a goading thought, — his stride
Hied hastier down the mountain-side;
Sullen he flung him in the boat,
An instant 'cross the lake it shot.
They landed in that silvery bay,
And eastward held their hasty way,

Till, with the latest beams of light,
The band arrived on Lanrick height,
Where mustered in the vale below
Clan-Alpine's men in martial show.

XXXI

A various scene the clansmen made:
Some sat, some stood, some slowly strayed;
But most, with mantles folded round,
Were couched to rest upon the ground,
Scarce to be known by curious eye
From the deep heather where they lie,
So well was matched the tartan screen
With heath-bell dark and brackens green;
Unless where, here and there, a blade
Or lance's point a glimmer made,
Like glow-worm twinkling through the shade.
But when, advancing through the gloom,
They saw the Chieftain's eagle plume,
Their shout of welcome, shrill and wide,
Shook the steep mountain's steady side.
Thrice it arose, and lake and fell
Three times returned the martial yell;
It died upon Bochastle's plain,
And Silence claimed her evening reign.

CANTO FOURTH

THE PROPHECY

I

'THE rose is fairest when 't is budding new,
And hope is brightest when it dawns from fears;
The rose is sweetest washed with morning dew,
And love is loveliest when embalmed in tears.
O wilding rose, whom fancy thus endears,
I bid your blossoms in my bonnet wave,
Emblem of hope and love through future years!'
Thus spoke young Norman, heir of Armandave,
What time the sun arose on Vennachar's broad wave.

II

Such fond conceit, half said, half sung,
Love prompted to the bridegroom's tongue.
All while he stripped the wild-rose spray,
His axe and bow beside him lay,
For on a pass 'twixt lake and wood
A wakeful sentinel he stood.
Hark! — on the rock a footstep rung,
And instant to his arms he sprung.
'Stand, or thou diest! — What, Malise? — soon
Art thou returned from Braes of Doune.

By thy keen step and glance I know,
Thou bring'st us tidings of the foe.'
For while the Fiery Cross hied on,
On distant scout had Malise gone.
'Where sleeps the Chief?' the henchman said.
'Apart, in yonder misty glade;
To his lone couch I'll be your guide.'
Then called a slumberer by his side,
And stirred him with his slackened bow,—
'Up, up, Glentarkin! rouse thee, ho!
We seek the Chieftain; on the track
Keep eagle watch till I come back.'

III

Together up the pass they sped:
'What of the foeman?' Norman said.
'Varying reports from near and far;
This certain, — that a band of war
Has for two days been ready boune,
At prompt command to march from Doune;
King James the while, with princely powers,
Holds revelry in Stirling towers.
Soon will this dark and gathering cloud
Speak on our glens in thunder loud.
Inured to bide such bitter bout,
The warrior's plaid may bear it out;
But, Norman, how wilt thou provide

A shelter for thy bonny bride?'
'What! know ye not that Roderick's care
To the lone isle hath caused repair
Each maid and matron of the clan,
And every child and aged man
Unfit for arms; and given his charge,
Nor skiff nor shallop, boat nor barge,
Upon these lakes shall float at large,
But all beside the islet moor,
That such dear pledge may rest secure?'

IV

''T is well advised, — the Chieftain's plan
Bespeaks the father of his clan.
But wherefore sleeps Sir Roderick Dhu
Apart from all his followers true?'
'It is because last evening-tide
Brian an augury hath tried,
Of that dread kind which must not be
Unless in dread extremity,
The Taghairm called; by which, afar,[1]
Our sires foresaw the events of war.
Duncraggan's milk-white bull they slew.'

MALISE

'Ah! well the gallant brute I knew!
The choicest of the prey we had

[1] See Note 45.

When swept our merrymen Gallangad,[1]
His hide was snow, his horns were dark,
His red eye glowed like fiery spark;
So fierce, so tameless, and so fleet,
Sore did he cumber our retreat,
And kept our stoutest kerns in awe,
Even at the pass of Beal 'maha.
But steep and flinty was the road,
And sharp the hurrying pikeman's goad,
And when we came to Dennan's Row
A child might scathless stroke his brow.'

V

NORMAN

'That bull was slain; his reeking hide
They stretched the cataract beside,
Whose waters their wild tumult toss
Adown the black and craggy boss
Of that huge cliff whose ample verge
Tradition calls the Hero's Targe.[2]
Couched on a shelf beneath its brink,
Close where the thundering torrents sink,
Rocking beneath their headlong sway,
And drizzled by the ceaseless spray,
Midst groan of rock and roar of stream,
The wizard waits prophetic dream.

[1] See Note 46. [2] See Note 47.

Nor distant rests the Chief; — but hush!
See, gliding slow through mist and bush,
The hermit gains yon rock, and stands
To gaze upon our slumbering bands.
Seems he not, Malise, like a ghost,
That hovers o'er a slaughtered host?
Or raven on the blasted oak,
That, watching while the deer is broke,[1]
His morsel claims with sullen croak?'

MALISE

'Peace! peace! to other than to me
Thy words were evil augury;
But still I hold Sir Roderick's blade
Clan-Alpine's omen and her aid,
Not aught that, gleaned from heaven or hell,
Yon fiend-begotten Monk can tell.
The Chieftain joins him, see — and now
Together they descend the brow.'

VI

And, as they came, with Alpine's Lord
The Hermit Monk held solemn word: —
'Roderick! it is a fearful strife,
For man endowed with mortal life,
Whose shroud of sentient clay can still

[1] See Note 48.

Feel feverish pang and fainting chill,
Whose eye can stare in stony trance,
Whose hair can rouse like warrior's lance, —
'T is hard for such to view, unfurled,
The curtain of the future world.
Yet, witness every quaking limb,
My sunken pulse, mine eyeballs dim,
My soul with harrowing anguish torn,
This for my Chieftain have I borne! —
The shapes that sought my fearful couch
A human tongue may ne'er avouch;
No mortal man — save he, who, bred
Between the living and the dead,
Is gifted beyond nature's law —
Had e'er survived to say he saw.
At length the fateful answer came
In characters of living flame!
Not spoke in word, nor blazed in scroll,
But borne and branded on my soul: —
WHICH SPILLS THE FOREMOST FOEMAN'S LIFE,
THAT PARTY CONQUERS IN THE STRIFE.'[1]

VII

'Thanks, Brian, for thy zeal and care!
Good is thine augury, and fair.
Clan-Alpine ne'er in battle stood

[1] See Note 49.

But first our broadswords tasted blood.
A surer victim still I know,
Self-offered to the auspicious blow:
A spy has sought my land this morn, —
No eve shall witness his return!
My followers guard each pass's mouth,
To east, to westward, and to south;
Red Murdoch, bribed to be his guide,
Has charge to lead his steps aside,
Till in deep path or dingle brown
He light on those shall bring him down.
But see, who comes his news to show!
Malise! what tidings of the foe?'

VIII

'At Doune, o'er many a spear and glaive,
Two Barons proud their banners wave.
I saw the Moray's silver star,
And marked the sable pale of Mar.'
'By Alpine's soul, high tidings those!
I love to hear of worthy foes.
When move they on?' 'To-morrow's noon
Will see them here for battle boune.'
'Then shall it see a meeting stern!
But, for the place, — say, couldst thou learn
Nought of the friendly clans of Earn?
Strengthened by them, we well might bide

The battle on Benledi's side.
Thou couldst not? — well! Clan-Alpine's men
Shall man the Trosachs' shaggy glen;
Within Loch Katrine's gorge we'll fight,
All in our maids' and matrons' sight,
Each for his hearth and household fire,
Father for child, and son for sire,
Lover for maid beloved! — But why —
Is it the breeze affects mine eye?
Or dost thou come, ill-omened tear!
A messenger of doubt or fear?
No! sooner may the Saxon lance
Unfix Benledi from his stance,
Than doubt or terror can pierce through
The unyielding heart of Roderick Dhu!
'T is stubborn as his trusty targe.
Each to his post! — all know their charge.'
The pibroch sounds, the bands advance,
The broadswords gleam, the banners dance,
Obedient to the Chieftain's glance.
I turn me from the martial roar,
And seek Coir-Uriskin once more.

IX

Where is the Douglas? — he is gone;
And Ellen sits on the grey stone
Fast by the cave, and makes her moan,

While vainly Allan's words of cheer
Are poured on her unheeding ear.
'He will return — dear lady, trust! —
With joy return; — he will — he must.
Well was it time to seek afar
Some refuge from impending war,
When e'en Clan-Alpine's rugged swarm
Are cowed by the approaching storm.
I saw their boats with many a light,
Floating the livelong yesternight,
Shifting like flashes darted forth
By the red streamers of the north;
I marked at morn how close they ride,
Thick moored by the lone islet's side,
Like wild ducks couching in the fen
When stoops the hawk upon the glen.
Since this rude race dare not abide
The peril on the mainland side,
Shall not thy noble father's care
Some safe retreat for thee prepare?'

X

ELLEN

'No, Allan, no! Pretext so kind
My wakeful terrors could not blind.
When in such tender tone, yet grave,
Douglas a parting blessing gave,

The tear that glistened in his eye
Drowned not his purpose fixed and high.
My soul, though feminine and weak,
Can image his; e'en as the lake,
Itself disturbed by slightest stroke,
Reflects the invulnerable rock.
He hears report of battle rife,
He deems himself the cause of strife.
I saw him redden when the theme
Turned, Allan, on thine idle dream
Of Malcolm Græme in fetters bound,
Which I, thou saidst, about him wound.
Think'st thou he trowed thine omen aught?
O no! 't was apprehensive thought
For the kind youth, — for Roderick too —
Let me be just — that friend so true;
In danger both, and in our cause!
Minstrel, the Douglas dare not pause.
Why else that solemn warning given,
'If not on earth, we meet in heaven!"
Why else, to Cambus-kenneth's fane,
If eve return him not again,
Am I to hie and make me known?
Alas! he goes to Scotland's throne,
Buys his friends' safety with his own;
He goes to do — what I had done,
Had Douglas' daughter been his son!'

XI

'Nay, lovely Ellen! — dearest, nay!
If aught should his return delay,
He only named yon holy fane
As fitting place to meet again.
Be sure he's safe, and for the Græme, —
Heaven's blessing on his gallant name! —
My visioned sight may yet prove true,
Nor bode of ill to him or you.
When did my gifted dream beguile?
Think of the stranger at the isle,
And think upon the harpings slow
That presaged this approaching woe!
Sooth was my prophecy of fear;
Believe it when it augurs cheer.
Would we had left this dismal spot!
Ill luck still haunts a fairy grot.
Of such a wondrous tale I know —
Dear lady, change that look of woe,
My harp was wont thy grief to cheer.'

ELLEN

'Well, be it as thou wilt; I hear,
But cannot stop the bursting tear.'
The Minstrel tried his simple art,
But distant far was Ellen's heart.

XII

BALLAD[1]

ALICE BRAND

Merry it is in the good greenwood,
When the mavis and merle are singing,
When the deer sweeps by, and the hounds are in cry,
And the hunter's horn is ringing.

'O Alice Brand, my native land
Is lost for love of you;
And we must hold by wood and wold,
As outlaws wont to do.

'O Alice, 't was all for thy locks so bright,
And 't was all for thine eyes so blue,
That on the night of our luckless flight
Thy brother bold I slew.

'Now must I teach to hew the beech
The hand that held the glaive,
For leaves to spread our lowly bed,
And stakes to fence our cave.

'And for vest of pall, thy fingers small,
That wont on harp to stray,
A cloak must shear from the slaughtered deer,
To keep the cold away.'

[1] See Note 50.

'O Richard! if my brother died,
'T was but a fatal chance;
For darkling was the battle tried,
And fortune sped the lance.

'If pall and vair no more I wear,
Nor thou the crimson sheen,
As warm, we'll say, is the russet grey,
As gay the forest-green.

'And, Richard, if our lot be hard,
And lost thy native land,
Still Alice has her own Richard,
And he his Alice Brand.'

XIII

BALLAD CONTINUED

'T is merry, 't is merry, in good greenwood;
So blithe Lady Alice is singing;
On the beech's pride, and oak's brown side,
Lord Richard's axe is ringing.

Up spoke the moody Elfin King,
Who woned within the hill,[1] —
Like wind in the porch of a ruined church,
His voice was ghostly shrill.

[1] See Note 51.

'Why sounds yon stroke on beech and oak,
Our moonlight circle's screen?
Or who comes here to chase the deer,
Beloved of our Elfin Queen?[1]
Or who may dare on wold to wear
The fairies' fatal green?[2]

'Up, Urgan, up! to yon mortal hie,
For thou wert christened man;[3]
For cross or sign thou wilt not fly,
For muttered word or ban.

'Lay on him the curse of the withered heart,
The curse of the sleepless eye;
Till he wish and pray that his life would part,
Nor yet find leave to die.'

XIV

BALLAD CONTINUED

'T is merry, 't is merry, in good greenwood,
Though the birds have stilled their singing;
The evening blaze doth Alice raise,
And Richard is fagots bringing.

Up Urgan starts, that hideous dwarf,
Before Lord Richard stands,

[1] See Note 52. [2] See Note 53. [3] See Note 54.

And, as he crossed and blessed himself,
'I fear not sign,' quoth the grisly elf,
'That is made with bloody hands.'

But out then spoke she, Alice Brand,
That woman void of fear, —
'And if there's blood upon his hand,
'T is but the blood of deer.'

'Now loud thou liest, thou bold of mood!
It cleaves unto his hand,
The stain of thine own kindly blood,
The blood of Ethert Brand.'

Then forward stepped she, Alice Brand,
And made the holy sign, —
'And if there's blood on Richard's hand,
A spotless hand is mine.

'And I conjure thee, demon elf,
By Him whom demons fear,
To show us whence thou art thyself,
And what thine errand here?'

XV

BALLAD CONTINUED

''T is merry, 't is merry, in Fairy-land,
When fairy birds are singing,

When the court doth ride by their monarch's side,
With bit and bridle ringing:

'And gaily shines the Fairy-land —
But all is glistening show,[1]
Like the idle gleam that December's beam
Can dart on ice and snow.

'And fading, like that varied gleam,
Is our inconstant shape,
Who now like knight and lady seem,
And now like dwarf and ape.

'It was between the night and day,
When the Fairy King has power,
That I sunk down in a sinful fray,
And 'twixt life and death was snatched away
To the joyless Elfin bower.[2]

'But wist I of a woman bold,
Who thrice my brow durst sign,
I might regain my mortal mould,
As fair a form as thine.'

She crossed him once — she crossed him twice —
That lady was so brave;
The fouler grew his goblin hue,
The darker grew the cave.

[1] See Note 55. [2] See Note 56.

She crossed him thrice, that lady bold;
He rose beneath her hand
The fairest knight on Scottish mould,
Her brother, Ethert Brand!

Merry it is in good greenwood,
When the mavis and merle are singing,
But merrier were they in Dunfermline grey,
When all the bells were ringing.

XVI

Just as the minstrel sounds were stayed,
A stranger climbed the steepy glade;
His martial step, his stately mien,
His hunting-suit of Lincoln green,
His eagle glance, remembrance claims —
'T is Snowdoun's Knight, 't is James Fitz-James.
Ellen beheld as in a dream,
Then, starting, scarce suppressed a scream:
'O stranger! in such hour of fear
What evil hap has brought thee here?'
'An evil hap how can it be
That bids me look again on thee?
By promise bound, my former guide
Met me betimes this morning-tide,
And marshalled over bank and bourne
The happy path of my return.'

'The happy path! — what! said he nought
Of war, of battle to be fought,
Of guarded pass?' 'No, by my faith!
Nor saw I aught could augur scathe.'
'O haste thee, Allan, to the kern:
Yonder his tartans I discern;
Learn thou his purpose, and conjure
That he will guide the stranger sure! —
What prompted thee, unhappy man?
The meanest serf in Roderick's clan
Had not been bribed, by love or fear,
Unknown to him to guide thee here.'

XVII

'Sweet Ellen, dear my life must be,
Since it is worthy care from thee;
Yet life I hold but idle breath
When love or honour's weighed with death.
Then let me profit by my chance,
And speak my purpose bold at once.
I come to bear thee from a wild
Where ne'er before such blossom smiled,
By this soft hand to lead thee far
From frantic scenes of feud and war.
Near Bochastle my horses wait;
They bear us soon to Stirling gate.
I'll place thee in a lovely bower,

I'll guard thee like a tender flower —'
'O hush, Sir Knight! 't were female art,
To say I do not read thy heart;
Too much, before, my selfish ear
Was idly soothed my praise to hear.
That fatal bait hath lured thee back,
In deathful hour, o'er dangerous track;
And how, O how, can I atone
The wreck my vanity brought on! —
One way remains — I'll tell him all —
Yes! struggling bosom, forth it shall!
Thou, whose light folly bears the blame,
Buy thine own pardon with thy shame!
But first — my father is a man
Outlawed and exiled, under ban;
The price of blood is on his head,
With me, 't were infamy to wed.
Still wouldst thou speak? — then hear the truth!
Fitz-James, there is a noble youth
If yet he is! — exposed for me
And mine to dread extremity —
Thou hast the secret of my heart;
Forgive, be generous, and depart!'

XVIII

Fitz-James knew every wily train
A lady's fickle heart to gain,

But here he knew and felt them vain.
There shot no glance from Ellen's eye,
To give her steadfast speech the lie;
In maiden confidence she stood,
Though mantled in her cheek the blood,
And told her love with such a sigh
Of deep and hopless agony,
As death had sealed her Malcolm's doom
And she sat sorrowing on his tomb.
Hope vanished from Fitz-James's eye,
But not with hope fled sympathy.
He proffered to attend her side,
As brother would a sister guide.
'O little know'st thou Roderick's heart!
Safer for both we go apart.
O haste thee, and from Allan learn
If thou mayst trust yon wily kern.'
With hand upon his forehead laid,
The conflict of his mind to shade,
A parting step or two he made;
Then, as some thought had crossed his brain,
He paused, and turned, and came again.

XIX

'Hear, lady, yet a parting word! —
It chanced in fight that my poor sword

Preserved the life of Scotland's lord.
This ring the grateful Monarch gave,
And bade, when I had boon to crave,
To bring it back, and boldly claim
The recompense that I would name.
Ellen, I am no courtly lord,
But one who lives by lance and sword,
Whose castle is his helm and shield,
His lordship the embattled field.
What from a prince can I demand,
Who neither reck of state nor land?
Ellen, thy hand — the ring is thine;
Each guard and usher knows the sign.
Seek thou the King without delay;
This signet shall secure thy way:
And claim thy suit, whate'er it be,
As ransom of his pledge to me.'
He placed the golden circlet on,
Paused — kissed her hand — and then was gone.
The aged Minstrel stood aghast,
So hastily Fitz-James shot past.
He joined his guide, and wending down
The ridges of the mountain brown,
Across the stream they took their way
That joins Loch Katrine to Achray.

XX

All in the Trosachs' glen was still,
Noontide was sleeping on the hill:
Sudden his guide whooped loud and high —
'Murdoch! was that a signal cry?'
He stammered forth, 'I shout to scare
Yon raven from his dainty fare.'
He looked — he knew the raven's prey,
His own brave steed: 'Ah! gallant grey!
For thee — for me, perchance — 't were well
We ne'er had seen the Trosachs' dell.
Murdoch, move first — but silently;
Whistle or whoop, and thou shalt die!'
Jealous and sullen on they fared,
Each silent, each upon his guard.

XXI

Now wound the path its dizzy ledge
Around a precipice's edge,
When lo! a wasted female form,
Blighted by wrath of sun and storm,
In tattered weeds and wild array,
Stood on a cliff beside the way,
And glancing round her restless eye,
Upon the wood, the rock, the sky,
Seemed nought to mark, yet all to spy.

Her brow was wreathed with gaudy broom;
With gesture wild she waved a plume
Of feathers, which the eagles fling
To crag and cliff from dusky wing;
Such spoils her desperate step had sought,
Where scarce was footing for the goat.
The tartan plaid she first descried,
And shrieked till all the rocks replied;
As loud she laughed when near they drew,
For then the Lowland garb she knew;
And then her hands she wildly wrung,
And then she wept, and then she sung —
She sung! — the voice, in better time,
Perchance to harp or lute might chime;
And now, though strained and roughened, still
Rung wildly sweet to dale and hill.

XXII

SONG

They bid me sleep, they bid me pray,
  They say my brain is warped and wrung —
I cannot sleep on Highland brae,
  I cannot pray in Highland tongue.
But were I now where Allan glides,
Or heard my native Devan's tides,
So sweetly would I rest, and pray
That Heaven would close my wintry day!

'T was thus my hair they bade me braid,
They made me to the church repair;
It was my bridal morn, they said,
And my true love would meet me there.
But woe betide the cruel guile
That drowned in blood the morning smile!
And woe betide the fairy dream!
I only waked to sob and scream.

XXIII

'Who is this maid? what means her lay?
She hovers o'er the hollow way,
And flutters wide her mantle grey,
As the lone heron spreads his wing,
By twilight, o'er a haunted spring.'
"T is Blanche of Devan,' Murdoch said,
'A crazed and captive Lowland maid,
Ta'en on the morn she was a bride,
When Roderick forayed Devan-side.
The gay bridegroom resistance made,
And felt our Chief's unconquered blade.
I marvel she is now at large,
But oft she 'scapes from Maudlin's charge.
Hence, brain-sick fool!' — He raised his bow: —
'Now, if thou strik'st her but one blow,
I'll pitch thee from the cliff as far
As ever peasant pitched a bar!'

'Thanks, champion, thanks!' the Maniac cried,
And pressed her to Fitz-James's side.
'See the grey pennons I prepare,
To seek my true love through the air!
I will not lend that savage groom,
To break his fall, one downy plume!
No! — deep amid disjointed stones,
The wolves shall batten on his bones,
And then shall his detested plaid,
By bush and brier in mid-air stayed,
Wave forth a banner fair and free,
Meet signal for their revelry.'

XXIV

'Hush thee, poor maiden, and be still!'
'O! thou look'st kindly, and I will.
Mine eye has dried and wasted been,
But still it loves the Lincoln green;
And, though mine ear is all unstrung,
Still, still it loves the Lowland tongue.

'For O my sweet William was forester true,
He stole poor Blanche's heart away!
His coat it was all of the greenwood hue,
And so blithely he trilled the Lowland lay!

'It was not that I meant to tell . . .
But thou art wise and guessest well.'

Then, in a low and broken tone,
And hurried note, the song went on.
Still on the Clansman fearfully
She fixed her apprehensive eye,
Then turned it on the Knight, and then
Her look glanced wildly o'er the glen.

XXV

'The toils are pitched, and the stakes are set, —
Ever sing merrily, merrily;
The bows they bend, and the knives they whet,
Hunters live so cheerily.

'It was a stag, a stag of ten,[1]
Bearing its branches sturdily;
He came stately down the glen, —
Ever sing hardily, hardily.

'It was there he met with a wounded doe,
She was bleeding deathfully;
She warned him of the toils below,
O, so faithfully, faithfully!

'He had an eye, and he could heed, —
Ever sing warily, warily;
He had a foot, and he could speed, —
Hunters watch so narrowly.'

[1] Having ten branches on his antlers.

XXVI

Fitz-James's mind was passion-tossed,
When Ellen's hints and fears were lost;
But Murdoch's shout suspicion wrought,
And Blanche's song conviction brought.
Not like a stag that spies the snare,
But lion of the hunt aware,
He waved at once his blade on high,
'Disclose thy treachery, or die!'
Forth at full speed the Clansman flew,
But in his race his bow he drew.
The shaft just grazed Fitz-James's crest,
And thrilled in Blanche's faded breast. —
Murdoch of Alpine! prove thy speed,
For ne'er had Alpine's son such need;
With heart of fire, and foot of wind,
The fierce avenger is behind!
Fate judges of the rapid strife —
The forfeit death — the prize is life;
Thy kindred ambush lies before,
Close couched upon the heathery moor;
Them couldst thou reach! — it may not be —
Thine ambushed kin thou ne'er shalt see,
The fiery Saxon gains on thee! —
Resistless speeds the deadly thrust,
As lightning strikes the pine to dust;

With foot and hand Fitz-James must strain
Ere he can win his blade again.
Bent o'er the fallen with falcon eye,
He grimly smiled to see him die,
Then slower wended back his way,
Where the poor maiden bleeding lay.

XXVII

She sat beneath the birchen tree,
Her elbow resting on her knee;
She had withdrawn the fatal shaft,
And gazed on it, and feebly laughed;
Her wreath of broom and feathers grey,
Daggled with blood, beside her lay.
The Knight to staunch the life-stream tried, —
'Stranger, it is in vain!' she cried.
'This hour of death has given me more
Of reason's power than years before;
For, as these ebbing veins decay,
My frenzied visions fade away.
A helpless injured wretch I die,
And something tells me in thine eye
That thou wert mine avenger born.
Seest thou this tress? — O, still I've worn
This little tress of yellow hair,
Through danger, frenzy, and despair!
It once was bright and clear as thine,

But blood and tears have dimmed its shine.
I will not tell thee when 't was shred,
Nor from what guiltless victim's head, —
My brain would turn! — but it shall wave
Like plumage on thy helmet brave,
Till sun and wind shall bleach the stain,
And thou wilt bring it me again.
I waver still. — O God! more bright
Let reason beam her parting light! —
O, by thy knighthood's honoured sign,
And for thy life preserved by mine,
When thou shalt see a darksome man,
Who boasts him Chief of Alpine's Clan,
With tartans broad and shadowy plume,
And hand of blood, and brow of gloom,
Be thy heart bold, thy weapon strong,
And wreak poor Blanche of Devan's wrong! —
They watch for thee by pass and fell . . .
Avoid the path . . . O God! . . . farewell!'

XXVIII

A kindly heart had brave Fitz-James;
Fast poured his eyes at pity's claims;
And now, with mingled grief and ire,
He saw the murdered maid expire.
'God, in my need, be my relief,
As I wreak this on yonder Chief!'

A lock from Blanche's tresses fair
He blended with her bridegroom's hair;
The mingled braid in blood he dyed,
And placed it on his bonnet-side:
'By Him whose word is truth, I swear,
No other favour will I wear,
Till this sad token I imbrue
In the best blood of Roderick Dhu! —
But hark! what means yon faint halloo?
The chase is up, — but they shall know,
The stag at bay 's a dangerous foe.'
Barred from the known but guarded way,
Through copse and cliffs Fitz-James must stray,
And oft must change his desperate track,
By stream and precipice turned back.
Heartless, fatigued, and faint, at length,
From lack of food and loss of strength,
He couched him in a thicket hoar,
And thought his toils and perils o'er: —
'Of all my rash adventures past,
This frantic feat must prove the last!
Who e'er so mad but might have guessed
That all this Highland hornet's nest
Would muster up in swarms so soon
As e'er they heard of bands at Doune? —
Like bloodhounds now they search me out, —
Hark, to the whistle and the shout! —

If farther through the wilds I go,
I only fall upon the foe:
I 'll couch me here till evening grey,
Then darkling try my dangerous way.'

XXIX

The shades of eve come slowly down,
The woods are wrapt in deeper brown,
The owl awakens from her dell,
The fox is heard upon the fell;
Enough remains of glimmering light
To guide the wanderer's steps aright,
Yet not enough from far to show
His figure to the watchful foe.
With cautious step and ear awake,
He climbs the crag and threads the brake;
And not the summer solstice there
Tempered the midnight mountain air,
But every breeze that swept the wold
Benumbed his drenched limbs with cold.
In dread, in danger, and alone,
Famished and chilled, through ways unknown,
Tangled and steep, he journeyed on;
Till, as a rock's huge point he turned,
A watch-fire close before him burned.

XXX

Beside its embers red and clear,
Basked in his plaid a mountaineer;
And up he sprung with sword in hand, —
'Thy name and purpose! Saxon, stand!'
'A stranger.' 'What dost thou require?'
'Rest and a guide, and food and fire.
My life's beset, my path is lost,
The gale has chilled my limbs with frost.'
'Art thou a friend to Roderick?' 'No.'
'Thou dar'st not call thyself a foe?'
'I dare! to him and all the band
He brings to aid his murderous hand.'
'Bold words! — but, though the beast of game
The privilege of chase may claim,
Though space and law the stag we lend,
Ere hound we slip or bow we bend,
Who ever recked, where, how, or when,
The prowling fox was trapped or slain?[1]
Thus treacherous scouts, — yet sure they lie,
Who say thou cam'st a secret spy!'
'They do, by heaven! — come Roderick Dhu,
And of his clan the boldest two,
And let me but till morning rest,
I write the falsehood on their crest.'

[1] See Note 57.

'If by the blaze I mark aright,
Thou bear'st the belt and spur of Knight.'
'Then by these tokens mayst thou know
Each proud oppressor's mortal foe.'
'Enough, enough; sit down and share
A soldier's couch, a soldier's fare.'

XXXI

He gave him of his Highland cheer,
The hardened flesh of mountain deer;[1]
Dry fuel on the fire he laid,
And bade the Saxon share his plaid.
He tended him like welcome guest,
Then thus his further speech addressed: —
'Stranger, I am to Roderick Dhu
A clansman born, a kinsman true:
Each word against his honour spoke
Demands of me avenging stroke;
Yet more, — upon thy fate, 't is said,
A mighty augury is laid.
It rests with me to wind my horn, —
Thou art with numbers overborne;
It rests with me, here, brand to brand,
Worn as thou art, to bid thee stand:
But, not for clan, nor kindred's cause,
Will I depart from honour's laws;

[1] See Note 58.

To assail a wearied man were shame,
And stranger is a holy name;
Guidance and rest, and food and fire,
In vain he never must require.
Then rest thee here till dawn of day;
Myself will guide thee on the way,
O'er stock and stone, through watch and ward,
Till past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard,
As far as Coilantogle's ford;
From thence thy warrant is thy sword.'
'I take thy courtesy, by heaven,
As freely as 't is nobly given!'
'Well, rest thee; for the bittern's cry
Sings us the lake's wild lullaby.'
With that he shook the gathered heath,
And spread his plaid upon the wreath;
And the brave foemen, side by side,
Lay peaceful down like brothers tried,
And slept until the dawning beam
Purpled the mountain and the stream.

CANTO FIFTH

THE COMBAT

I

FAIR as the earliest beam of eastern light,
When first, by the bewildered pilgrim spied,
It smiles upon the dreary brow of night,
And silvers o'er the torrent's foaming tide,
And lights the fearful path on mountain-side, —
Fair as that beam, although the fairest far,
Giving to horror grace, to danger pride,
Shine martial Faith, and Courtesy's bright star,
Through all the wreckful storms that cloud the brow of War.

II

That early beam, so fair and sheen,
Was twinkling through the hazel screen,
When, rousing at its glimmer red,
The warriors left their lowly bed,
Looked out upon the dappled sky,
Muttered their soldier matins by,
And then awaked their fire, to steal,
As short and rude, their soldier meal.
That o'er, the Gael around him threw
His graceful plaid of varied hue,

And, true to promise, led the way,
By thicket green and mountain grey.
A wildering path! — they winded now
Along the precipice's brow,
Commanding the rich scenes beneath,
The windings of the Forth and Teith,
And all the vales between that lie,
Till Stirling's turrets melt in sky;
Then, sunk in copse, their farthest glance
Gained not the length of horseman's lance.
'T was oft so steep, the foot was fain
Assistance from the hand to gain;
So tangled oft that, bursting through,
Each hawthorn shed her showers of dew, —
That diamond dew, so pure and clear,
It rivals all but Beauty's tear!

III

At length they came where, stern and steep,
The hill sinks down upon the deep.
Here Vennachar in silver flows,
There, ridge on ridge, Benledi rose;
Ever the hollow path twined on,
Beneath steep bank and threatening stone;
A hundred men might hold the post
With hardihood against a host.
The rugged mountain's scanty cloak

Was dwarfish shrubs of birch and oak,
With shingles bare, and cliffs between,
And patches bright of bracken green,
And heather black, that waved so high,
It held the copse in rivalry.
But where the lake slept deep and still,
Dank osiers fringed the swamp and hill;
And oft both path and hill were torn,
Where wintry torrent down had borne,
And heaped upon the cumbered land
Its wreck of gravel, rocks, and sand.
So toilsome was the road to trace,
The guide, abating of his pace,
Led slowly through the pass's jaws,
And asked Fitz-James by what strange cause
He sought these wilds, traversed by few,
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.

IV

'Brave Gael, my pass, in danger tried,
Hangs in my belt and by my side;
Yet, sooth to tell,' the Saxon said,
'I dreamt not now to claim its aid.
When here, but three days since, I came,
Bewildered in pursuit of game,
All seemed as peaceful and as still
As the mist slumbering on yon hill;

Thy dangerous Chief was then afar,
Nor soon expected back from war.
Thus said, at least, my mountain-guide,
Though deep perchance the villain lied.'
'Yet why a second venture try?'
'A warrior thou, and ask me why! —
Moves our free course by such fixed cause
As gives the poor mechanic laws?
Enough, I sought to drive away
The lazy hours of peaceful day;
Slight cause will then suffice to guide
A Knight's free footsteps far and wide, —
A falcon flown, a greyhound strayed,
The merry glance of mountain maid;
Or, if a path be dangerous known,
The danger's self is lure alone.'

V

'Thy secret keep, I urge thee not; —
Yet, ere again ye sought this spot,
Say, heard ye nought of Lowland war,
Against Clan-Alpine, raised by Mar?'
'No, by my word; — of bands prepared
To guard King James's sports I heard;
Nor doubt I aught, but, when they hear
This muster of the mountaineer,
Their pennons will abroad be flung,

Which else in Doune had peaceful hung.'
'Free be they flung! for we were loath
Their silken folds should feast the moth.
Free be they flung! — as free shall wave
Clan-Alpine's pine in banner brave.
But, stranger, peaceful since you came,
Bewildered in the mountain-game,
Whence the bold boast by which you show
Vich-Alpine's vowed and mortal foe?'
'Warrior, but yester-morn I knew
Nought of thy Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
Save as an outlawed desperate man,
The chief of a rebellious clan,
Who, in the Regent's court and sight,
With ruffian dagger stabbed a knight;
Yet this alone might from his part
Sever each true and loyal heart.'

VI

Wrathful at such arraignment foul,
Dark lowered the clansman's sable scowl,
A space he paused, then sternly said,
'And heardst thou why he drew his blade?
Heardst thou that shameful word and blow
Brought Roderick's vengeance on his foe?
What recked the Chieftain if he stood
On Highland heath or Holy-Rood?

He rights such wrong where it is given,
If it were in the court of heaven.'
'Still was it outrage; — yet, 't is true,
Not then claimed sovereignty his due;
While Albany with feeble hand
Held borrowed truncheon of command,
The young King, mewed in Stirling tower,
Was stranger to respect and power.[1]
But then, thy Chieftain's robber life! —
Winning mean prey by causeless strife,
Wrenching from ruined Lowland swain
His herds and harvest reared in vain, —
Methinks a soul like thine should scorn
The spoils from such foul foray borne.'

VII

The Gael beheld him grim the while,
And answered with disdainful smile:
'Saxon, from yonder mountain high,
I marked thee send delighted eye
Far to the south and east, where lay,
Extended in succession gay,
Deep waving fields and pastures green,
With gentle slopes and groves between: —
These fertile plains, that softened vale,
Were once the birthright of the Gael;

[1] See Note 59.

The stranger came with iron hand,
And from our fathers reft the land.
Where dwell we now? See, rudely swell
Crag over crag, and fell o'er fell.
Ask we this savage hill we tread
For fattened steer or household bread,
Ask we for flocks these shingles dry,
And well the mountain might reply, —
"To you, as to your sires of yore,
Belong the target and claymore!
I give you shelter in my breast,
Your own good blade must win the rest."
Pent in this fortress of the North,
Think'st thou we will not sally forth,
To spoil the spoiler as we may,
And from the robber rend the prey?
Ay, by my soul! — While on yon plain
The Saxon rears one shock of grain,
While of ten thousand herds there strays
But one along yon river's maze, —
The Gael, of plain and river heir,
Shall with strong hand redeem his share.[1]
Where live the mountain Chiefs who hold
That plundering Lowland field and fold
Is aught but retribution true?
Seek other cause 'gainst Roderick Dhu.'

1 See Note 60.

VIII

Answered Fitz-James: 'And, if I sought,
Think'st thou no other could be brought?
What deem ye of my path waylaid?
My life given o'er to ambuscade?'
'As of a meed to rashness due:
Hadst thou sent warning fair and true, —
I seek my hound or falcon strayed,
I seek, good faith, a Highland maid, —
Free hadst thou been to come and go;
But secret path marks secret foe.
Nor yet for this, even as a spy,
Hadst thou, unheard, been doomed to die,
Save to fulfil an augury.'
'Well, let it pass; nor will I now
Fresh cause of enmity avow,
To chafe thy mood and cloud thy brow.
Enough, I am by promise tied
To match me with this man of pride:
Twice have I sought Clan-Alpine's glen
In peace; but when I come again,
I come with banner, brand, and bow,
As leader seeks his mortal foe.
For love-lorn swain in lady's bower
Ne'er panted for the appointed hour,
As I, until before me stand
This rebel Chieftain and his band!'

IX

'Have then thy wish!' — He whistled shrill,
And he was answered from the hill;
Wild as the scream of the curlew,
From crag to crag the signal flew.
Instant, through copse and heath, arose
Bonnets and spears and bended bows;
On right, on left, above, below,
Sprung up at once the lurking foe;
From shingles grey their lances start,
The bracken bush sends forth the dart,
The rushes and the willow-wand
Are bristling into axe and brand,
And every tuft of broom gives life
To plaided warrior armed for strife.
That whistle garrisoned the glen
At once with full five hundred men,
As if the yawning hill to heaven
A subterranean host had given.
Watching their leader's beck and will,
All silent there they stood and still.
Like the loose crags whose threatening mass
Lay tottering o'er the hollow pass,
As if an infant's touch could urge
Their headlong passage down the verge,
With step and weapon forward flung,

Upon the mountain-side they hung.
The Mountaineer cast glance of pride
Along Benledi's living side,
Then fixed his eye and sable brow
Full on Fitz-James: 'How say'st thou now?
These are Clan-Alpine's warriors true;
And, Saxon, — I am Roderick Dhu!'

X

Fitz-James was brave: — though to his heart
The life-blood thrilled with sudden start,
He manned himself with dauntless air,
Returned the Chief his haughty stare,
His back against a rock he bore,
And firmly placed his foot before: —
'Come one, come all! this rock shall fly
From its firm base as soon as I.'
Sir Roderick marked, — and in his eyes
Respect was mingled with surprise,
And the stern joy which warriors feel
In foeman worthy of their steel.
Short space he stood — then waved his hand:
Down sunk the disappearing band;
Each warrior vanished where he stood,
In broom or bracken, heath or wood;
Sunk brand and spear and bended bow,
In osiers pale and copses low;

It seemed as if their mother Earth
Had swallowed up her warlike birth.
The wind's last breath had tossed in air
Pennon and plaid and plumage fair, —
The next but swept a lone hill-side,
Where heath and fern were waving wide:
The sun's last glance was glinted back
From spear and glaive, from targe and jack;
The next, all unreflected, shone
On bracken green and cold grey stone.

XI

Fitz-James looked round, — yet scarce believed
The witness that his sight received;
Such apparition well might seem
Delusion of a dreadful dream.
Sir Roderick in suspense he eyed,
And to his look the Chief replied:
'Fear nought — nay, that I need not say —
But — doubt not aught from mine array.
Thou art my guest; — I pledged my word
As far as Coilantogle ford:
Nor would I call a clansman's brand
For aid against one valiant hand,
Though on our strife lay every vale
Rent by the Saxon from the Gael.
So move we on; — I only meant

To show the reed on which you leant,
Deeming this path you might pursue
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.'[1]
They moved; — I said Fitz-James was brave
As ever knight that belted glaive,
Yet dare not say that now his blood
Kept on its wont and tempered flood,
As, following Roderick's stride, he drew
That seeming lonesome pathway through,
Which yet by fearful proof was rife
With lances, that, to take his life,
Waited but signal from a guide,
So late dishonoured and defied.
Ever, by stealth, his eye sought round
The vanished guardians of the ground,
And still from copse and heather deep
Fancy saw spear and broadsword peep,
And in the plover's shrilly strain
The signal whistle heard again.
Nor breathed he free till far behind
The pass was left; for then they wind
Along a wide and level green,
Where neither tree nor tuft was seen,
Nor rush nor bush of broom was near,
To hide a bonnet or a spear.

[1] See Note 61.

XII

The Chief in silence strode before,
And reached that torrent's sounding shore,
Which, daughter of three mighty lakes,
From Vennachar in silver breaks,[1]
Sweeps through the plain, and ceaseless mines
On Bochastle the mouldering lines,
Where Rome, the Empress of the world,
Of yore her eagle wings unfurled.
And here his course the Chieftain stayed,
Threw down his target and his plaid,
And to the Lowland warrior said:
'Bold Saxon! to his promise just,
Vich-Alpine has discharged his trust.
This murderous Chief, this ruthless man,
This head of a rebellious clan,
Hath led thee safe, through watch and ward,
Far past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard.
Now, man to man, and steel to steel,
A Chieftain's vengeance thou shalt feel.
See, here all vantageless I stand,[2]
Armed like thyself with single brand;
For this is Coilantogle ford,
And thou must keep thee with thy sword.'

[1] See Note 62. [2] See Note 63.

XIII

The Saxon paused: 'I ne'er delayed,
When foeman bade me draw my blade;
Nay more, brave Chief, I vowed thy death;
Yet sure thy fair and generous faith,
And my deep debt for life preserved,
A better meed have well deserved:
Can nought but blood our feud atone?
Are there no means?' 'No, stranger, none!
And hear, — to fire thy flagging zeal, —
The Saxon cause rests on thy steel;
For thus spoke Fate by prophet bred
Between the living and the dead:
"'Who spills the foremost foeman's life,
His party conquers in the strife."'
'Then, by my word,' the Saxon said,
'The riddle is already read.
Seek yonder brake beneath the cliff, —
There lies Red Murdoch, stark and stiff.
Thus Fate hath solved her prophecy;
Then yield to Fate, and not to me.
To James at Stirling let us go,
When, if thou wilt be still his foe,
Or if the King shall not agree
To grant thee grace and favour free,
I plight mine honour, oath, and word

That, to thy native strengths restored,
With each advantage shalt thou stand
That aids thee now to guard thy land.'

XIV

Dark lightning flashed from Roderick's eye:
'Soars thy presumption, then, so high,
Because a wretched kern ye slew,
Homage to name to Roderick Dhu?
He yields not, he, to man nor Fate!
Thou add'st but fuel to my hate; —
My clansman's blood demands revenge.
Not yet prepared? — By heaven, I change
My thought, and hold thy valour light
As that of some vain carpet knight,
Who ill deserved my courteous care,
And whose best boast is but to wear
A braid of his fair lady's hair.'
'I thank thee, Roderick, for the word!
It nerves my heart, it steels my sword;
For I have sworn this braid to stain
In the best blood that warms thy vein.
Now, truce, farewell! and, ruth, begone! —
Yet think not that by thee alone,
Proud Chief! can courtesy be shown;
Though not from copse, or heath, or cairn,
Start at my whistle clansmen stern,

Of this small horn one feeble blast
Would fearful odds against thee cast.
But fear not — doubt not — which thou wilt —
We try this quarrel hilt to hilt.'
Then each at once his falchion drew,
Each on the ground his scabbard threw,
Each looked to sun and stream and plain
As what they ne'er might see again;
Then foot and point and eye opposed,
In dubious strife they darkly closed.

XV

Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,
That on the field his targe he threw,[1]
Whose brazen studs and tough bull-hide
Had death so often dashed aside;
For, trained abroad his arms to wield,
Fitz-James's blade was sword and shield.[2]
He practised every pass and ward,
To thrust, to strike, to feint, to guard;
While less expert, though stronger far,
The Gael maintained unequal war.
Three times in closing strife they stood,
And thrice the Saxon blade drank blood;
No stinted draught, no scanty tide,
The gushing flood the tartans dyed.
Fierce Roderick felt the fatal drain,

[1] See Note 64. [2] See Note 65.

And showered his blows like wintry rain;
And, as firm rock or castle-roof
Against the winter shower is proof,
The foe, invulnerable still,
Foiled his wild rage by steady skill;
Till, at advantage ta'en, his brand
Forced Roderick's weapon from his hand,
And backward borne upon the lea,
Brought the proud Chieftain to his knee.

XVI

'Now yield thee, or by Him who made
The world, thy heart's blood dyes my blade!'
'Thy threats, thy mercy, I defy!
Let recreant yield, who fears to die.' [1]
Like adder darting from his coil,
Like wolf that dashes through the toil,
Like mountain-cat who guards her young,
Full at Fitz-James's throat he sprung;
Received, but recked not of a wound,
And locked his arms his foeman round.
Now, gallant Saxon, hold thine own!
No maiden's hand is round thee thrown!
That desperate grasp thy frame might feel
Through bars of brass and triple steel!
They tug, they strain! down, down they go,

[1] See Note 66.

The Gael above, Fitz-James below.
The Chieftain's gripe his throat compressed,
His knee was planted on his breast;
His clotted locks he backward threw,
Across his brow his hand he drew,
From blood and mist to clear his sight,
Then gleamed aloft his dagger bright!
But hate and fury ill supplied
The stream of life's exhausted tide,
And all too late the advantage came,
To turn the odds of deadly game;
For, while the dagger gleamed on high,
Reeled soul and sense, reeled brain and eye.
Down came the blow! but in the heath
The erring blade found bloodless sheath.
The struggling foe may now unclasp
The fainting Chief's relaxing grasp;
Unwounded from the dreadful close,
But breathless all, Fitz-James arose.

XVII

He faltered thanks to Heaven for life,
Redeemed, unhoped, from desperate strife:
Next on his foe his look he cast,
Whose every gasp appeared his last;
In Roderick's gore he dipped the braid, —
'Poor Blanche! thy wrongs are dearly paid;

Yet with thy foe must die, or live,
The praise that faith and valour give.'
With that he blew a bugle note,
Undid the collar from his throat,
Unbonneted, and by the wave
Sat down his brow and hands to lave.
Then faint afar are heard the feet
Of rushing steeds in gallop fleet;
The sounds increase, and now are seen
Four mounted squires in Lincoln green;
Two who bear lance, and two who lead
By loosened rein a saddled steed;
Each onward held his headlong course,
And by Fitz-James reined up his horse, —
With wonder viewed the bloody spot.
'Exclaim not, gallants! question not.
You, Herbert and Luffness, alight,
And bind the wounds of yonder knight;
Let the grey palfrey bear his weight,
We destined for a fairer freight,
And bring him on to Stirling straight;
I will before at better speed,
To seek fresh horse and fitting weed.
The sun rides high: — I must be boune
To see the archer-game at noon;
But lightly Bayard clears the lea.
De Vaux and Herries, follow me.

XVIII

'Stand, Bayard, stand!' — the steed obeyed,
With arching neck and bended head,
And glancing eye and quivering ear,
As if he loved his lord to hear.
No foot Fitz-James in stirrup stayed,
No grasp upon the saddle laid,
But wreathed his left hand in the mane,
And lightly bounded from the plain,
Turned on the horse his armèd heel,
And stirred his courage with the steel.
Bounded the fiery steed in air,
The rider sat erect and fair,
Then like a bolt from steel crossbow
Forth launched, along the plain they go.
They dashed that rapid torrent through,
And up Carhonie's hill they flew;
Still at the gallop pricked the Knight,
His merrymen followed as they might.
Along thy banks, swift Teith, they ride,
And in the race they mock thy tide;
Torry and Lendrick now are past,
And Deanstown lies behind them cast;
They rise, the bannered towers of Doune,
They sink in distant woodland soon;
Blair-Drummond sees the hoofs strike fire,

They sweep like breeze through Ochtertyre;
They mark just glance and disappear
The lofty brow of ancient Kier;
They bathe their coursers' sweltering sides,
Dark Forth! amid thy sluggish tides,
And on the opposing shore take ground,
With plash, with scramble, and with bound.
Right-hand they leave thy cliffs, Craig-Forth!
And soon the bulwark of the North,
Grey Stirling, with her towers and town,
Upon their fleet career look down.

XIX

As up the flinty path they strained,
Sudden his steed the leader reined;
A signal to his squire he flung,
Who instant to his stirrup sprung: —
'Seest thou, De Vaux, yon woodsman grey,
Who townward holds the rocky way,
Of stature tall and poor array?
Mark'st thou the firm yet active stride,
With which he scales the mountain side?
Know'st thou from whence he comes, or whom?'
'No, by my word; — a burly groom
He seems, who in the field or chase
A baron's train would nobly grace.'
'Out, out, De Vaux! can fear supply,

And jealousy, no sharper eye?
Afar, ere to the hill he drew,
That stately form and step I knew;
Like form in Scotland is not seen,
Treads not such step on Scottish green.
'T is James of Douglas, by Saint Serle!
The uncle of the banished Earl.
Away, away, to court, to show
The near approach of dreaded foe:
The King must stand upon his guard;
Douglas and he must meet prepared.'
Then right-hand wheeled their steeds, and straight
They won the Castle's postern gate.

XX

The Douglas, who had bent his way
From Cambus-kenneth's abbey grey,
Now, as he climbed the rocky shelf,
Held sad communion with himself: —
'Yes! all is true my fears could frame;
A prisoner lies the noble Græme,
And fiery Roderick soon will feel
The vengeance of the royal steel.
I, only I, can ward their fate, —
God grant the ransom come not late!
The Abbess hath her promise given,
My child shall be the bride of Heaven; —

Be pardoned one repining tear!
For He who gave her knows how dear,
How excellent! — but that is by,
And now my business is — to die.
Ye towers! within whose circuit dread
A Douglas by his sovereign bled;
And thou, O sad and fatal mound![1]
That oft hast heard the death-axe sound,
As on the noblest of the land
Fell the stern headsman's bloody hand, —
The dungeon, block, and nameless tomb
Prepare — for Douglas seeks his doom!
But hark! what blithe and jolly peal
Makes the Franciscan steeple reel?
And see! upon the crowded street,
In motley groups what masquers meet!
Banner and pageant, pipe and drum,
And merry morrice-dancers come.
I guess, by all this quaint array,
The burghers hold their sports to-day.[2]
James will be there; he loves such show,
Where the good yeoman bends his bow,
And the tough wrestler foils his foe,
As well as where, in proud career,
The high-born tilter shivers spear.
I'll follow to the Castle-park,

[1] See Note 67. [2] See Note 68.

And play my prize; — King James shall mark
If age has tamed these sinews stark,
Whose force so oft in happier days
His boyish wonder loved to praise.'

XXI

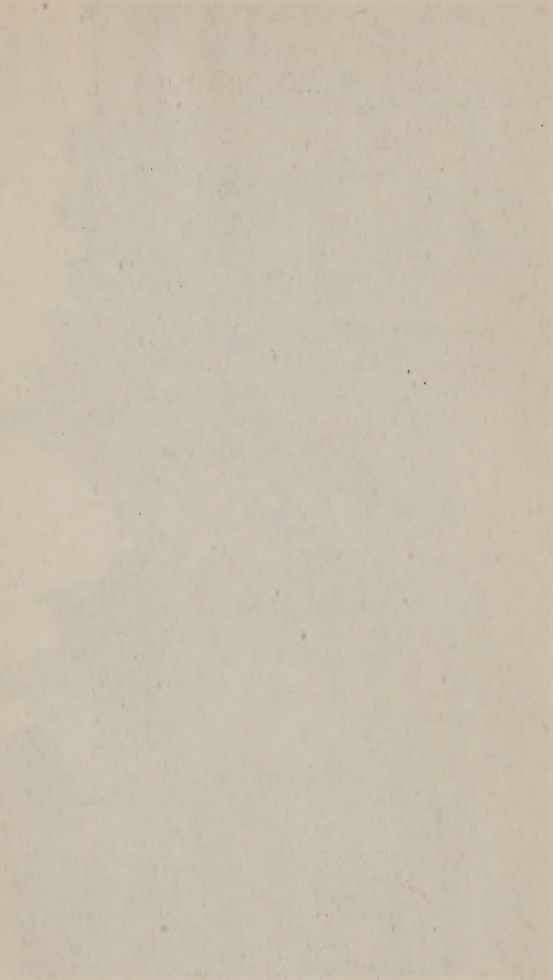
The Castle gates were open flung,
The quivering drawbridge rocked and rung,
And echoed loud the flinty street
Beneath the courser's clattering feet,
As slowly down the steep descent
Fair Scotland's King and nobles went,
While all along the crowded way
Was jubilee and loud huzza.
And ever James was bending low
To his white jennet's saddle-bow,
Doffing his cap to city dame,
Who smiled and blushed for pride and shame.
And well the simperer might be vain, —
He chose the fairest of the train.
Gravely he greets each city sire,
Commends each pageant's quaint attire,
Gives to the dancers thanks aloud,
And smiles and nods upon the crowd,
Who rend the heavens with their acclaims, —
'Long live the Commons' King, King James!'
Behind the King thronged peer and knight,

And noble dame and damsel bright,
Whose fiery steeds ill brooked the stay
Of the steep street and crowded way.
But in the train you might discern
Dark lowering brow and visage stern;
There nobles mourned their pride restrained,
And the mean burgher's joys disdained;
And chiefs, who, hostage for their clan,
Were each from home a banished man,
There thought upon their own grey tower,
Their waving woods, their feudal power,
And deemed themselves a shameful part
Of pageant which they cursed in heart.

XXII

Now, in the Castle-park, drew out
Their checkered bands the joyous rout.
There morricers, with bell at heel
And blade in hand, their mazes wheel;
But chief, beside the butts, there stand
Bold Robin Hood and all his band,[1] —
Friar Tuck with quarterstaff and cowl,
Old Scathelocke with his surly scowl,
Maid Marian, fair as ivory bone,
Scarlet, and Mutch, and Little John;
Their bugles challenge all that will,

[1] See Note 69.



Stirling Castle

In archery to prove their skill.
The Douglas bent a bow of might, —
His first shaft centred in the white,
And when in turn he shot again,
His second split the first in twain.
From the King's hand must Douglas take
A silver dart, the archer's stake;
Fondly he watched, with watery eye,
Some answering glance of sympathy, —
No kind emotion made reply!
Indifferent as to archer wight,
The monarch gave the arrow bright.[1]

XXIII

Now, clear the ring! for, hand to hand,
The manly wrestlers take their stand.
Two o'er the rest superior rose,
And proud demanded mightier foes, —
Nor called in vain, for Douglas came.
For life is Hugh of Larbert lame;
Scarce better John of Alloa's fare,
Whom senseless home his comrades bare.
Prize of the wrestling match, the King
To Douglas gave a golden ring,[2]
While coldly glanced his eye of blue,
As frozen drop of wintry dew.
Douglas would speak, but in his breast

[1] See Note 70. [2] See Note 71.

His struggling soul his words suppressed;
Indignant then he turned him where
Their arms the brawny yeomen bare,
To hurl the massive bar in air.
When each his utmost strength had shown,
The Douglas rent an earth-fast stone
From its deep bed, then heaved it high,
And sent the fragment through the sky
A rood beyond the farthest mark;
And still in Stirling's royal park,
The grey-haired sires, who know the past,
To strangers point the Douglas cast,
And moralise on the decay
Of Scottish strength in modern day.

XXIV

The vale with loud applauses rang,
The Ladies' Rock sent back the clang.
The King, with look unmoved, bestowed
A purse well filled with pieces broad.
Indignant smiled the Douglas proud,
And threw the gold among the crowd,
Who now with anxious wonder scan,
And sharper glance, the dark grey man;
Till whispers rose among the throng,
That heart so free, and hand so strong,
Must to the Douglas blood belong.

The old men marked and shook the head,
To see his hair with silver spread,
And winked aside, and told each son
Of feats upon the English done,
Ere Douglas of the stalwart hand
Was exiled from his native land.
The women praised his stately form,
Though wrecked by many a winter's storm;
The youth with awe and wonder saw
His strength surpassing Nature's law.
Thus judged, as is their wont, the crowd,
Till murmurs rose to clamours loud.
But not a glance from that proud ring
Of peers who circled round the King
With Douglas held communion kind,
Or called the banished man to mind;
No, not from those who at the chase
Once held his side the honoured place,
Begirt his board, and in the field
Found safety underneath his shield;
For he whom royal eyes disown,
When was his form to courtiers known!

XXV

The Monarch saw the gambols flag,
And bade let loose a gallant stag,
Whose pride, the holiday to crown,

Two favourite greyhounds should pull down,
That venison free and Bourdeaux wine
Might serve the archery to dine.
But Lufra, — whom from Douglas' side
Nor bribe nor threat could e'er divide,
The fleetest hound in all the North, —
Brave Lufra saw, and darted forth.
She left the royal hounds midway,
And dashing on the antlered prey,
Sunk her sharp muzzle in his flank,
And deep the flowing life-blood drank.
The king's stout huntsman saw the sport
By strange intruder broken short,
Came up, and with his leash unbound
In anger struck the noble hound.
The Douglas had endured, that morn,
The King's cold look, the nobles' scorn,
And last, and worst to spirit proud,
Had borne the pity of the crowd;
But Lufra had been fondly bred,
To share his board, to watch his bed,
And oft would Ellen Lufra's neck
In maiden glee with garlands deck;
They were such playmates that with name
Of Lufra Ellen's image came.
His stifled wrath is brimming high,
In darkened brow and flashing eye;

As waves before the bark divide,
The crowd gave way before his stride;
Needs but a buffet and no more,
The groom lies senseless in his gore.
Such blow no other hand could deal,
Though gauntleted in glove of steel.

XXVI

Then clamoured loud the royal train,
And brandished swords and staves amain,
But stern the Baron's warning: 'Back!
Back, on your lives, ye menial pack!
Beware the Douglas. — Yes! behold,
King James! The Douglas, doomed of old,
And vainly sought for near and far,
A victim to atone the war,
A willing victim, now attends,
Nor craves thy grace but for his friends.'
'Thus is my clemency repaid?
Presumptuous Lord!' the Monarch said:
'Of thy misproud ambitious clan,
Thou, James of Bothwell, wert the man,
The only man, in whom a foe
My woman-mercy would not know;
But shall a Monarch's presence brook
Injurious blow and haughty look?
What ho! the Captain of our Guard!

Give the offender fitting ward.
Break off the sports!' — for tumult rose,
And yeomen 'gan to bend their bows, —
'Break off the sports!' he said and frowned,
'And bid our horsemen clear the ground.'

XXVII

Then uproar wild and misarray
Marred the fair form of festal day.
The horsemen pricked among the crowd,
Repelled by threats and insult loud;
To earth are borne the old and weak,
The timorous fly, the women shriek;
With flint, with shaft, with staff, with bar,
The hardier urge tumultuous war.
At once round Douglas darkly sweep
The royal spears in circle deep,
And slowly scale the pathway steep,
While on the rear in thunder pour
The rabble with disordered roar.
With grief the noble Douglas saw
The Commons rise against the law,
And to the leading soldier said:
'Sir John of Hyndford, 't was my blade,
That knighthood on thy shoulder laid;
For that good deed permit me then
A word with these misguided men.

XXVIII

'Hear, gentle friends, ere yet for me
Ye break the bands of fealty.
My life, my honour, and my cause,
I tender free to Scotland's laws.
Are these so weak as must require
The aid of your misguided ire?
Or if I suffer causeless wrong,
Is then my selfish rage so strong,
My sense of public weal so low,
That, for mean vengeance on a foe,
Those cords of love I should unbind
Which knit my country and my kind?
O no! Believe, in yonder tower
It will not soothe my captive hour,
To know those spears our foes should dread
For me in kindred gore are red:
To know, in fruitless brawl begun,
For me that mother wails her son,
For me that widow's mate expires,
For me that orphans weep their sires,
That patriots mourn insulted laws,
And curse the Douglas for the cause.
O let your patience ward such ill,
And keep your right to love me still!'

XXIX

The crowd's wild fury sunk again
In tears, as tempests melt in rain.
With lifted hands and eyes, they prayed
For blessings on his generous head
Who for his country felt alone,
And prized her blood beyond his own.
Old men upon the verge of life
Blessed him who stayed the civil strife;
And mothers held their babes on high,
The self-devoted Chief to spy,
Triumphant over wrongs and ire,
To whom the prattlers owed a sire.
Even the rough soldier's heart was moved;
As if behind some bier beloved,
With trailing arms and drooping head,
The Douglas up the hill he led,
And at the Castle's battled verge,
With sighs resigned his honoured charge.

XXX

The offended Monarch rode apart,
With bitter thought and swelling heart,
And would not now vouchsafe again
Through Stirling streets to lead his train.
'O Lenox, who would wish to rule

This changeling crowd, this common fool?
Hear'st thou,' he said, 'the loud acclaim
With which they shout the Douglas name?
With like acclaim the vulgar throat
Strained for King James their morning note;
With like acclaim they hailed the day
When first I broke the Douglas sway;
And like acclaim would Douglas greet
If he could hurl me from my seat.
Who o'er the herd would wish to reign,
Fantastic, fickle, fierce, and vain?
Vain as the leaf upon the stream,
And fickle as a changeful dream;
Fantastic as a woman's mood,
And fierce as Frenzy's fevered blood.
Thou many-headed monster-thing,
O who would wish to be thy king?

XXXI

'But soft! what messenger of speed
Spurs hitherward his panting steed?
I guess his cognizance afar —
What from our cousin, John of Mar?'
'He prays, my liege, your sports keep bound
Within the safe and guarded ground;
For some foul purpose yet unknown, —
Most sure for evil to the throne, —

The outlawed Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
Has summoned his rebellious crew;
'T is said, in James of Bothwell's aid
These loose banditti stand arrayed.
The Earl of Mar this morn from Doune
To break their muster marched, and soon
Your Grace will hear of battle fought;
But earnestly the Earl besought,
Till for such danger he provide,
With scanty train you will not ride.'

XXXII

'Thou warn'st me I have done amiss, —
I should have earlier looked to this;
I lost it in this bustling day.
Retrace with speed thy former way;
Spare not for spoiling of thy steed,
The best of mine shall be thy meed.
Say to our faithful Lord of Mar,
We do forbid the intended war;
Roderick this morn in single fight
Was made our prisoner by a knight,
And Douglas hath himself and cause
Submitted to our kingdom's laws.
The tidings of their leaders lost
Will soon dissolve the mountain host,
Nor would we that the vulgar feel,

For their Chief's crimes, avenging steel.
Bear Mar our message, Braco, fly!'
He turned his steed, — 'My liege, I hie,
Yet ere I cross this lily lawn
I fear the broadswords will be drawn.'
The turf the flying courser spurned,
And to his towers the King returned.

XXXIII

Ill with King James's mood that day
Suited gay feast and minstrel lay;
Soon were dismissed the courtly throng,
And soon cut short the festal song.
Nor less upon the saddened town
The evening sunk in sorrow down.
The burghers spoke of civil jar,
Of rumoured feuds and mountain war,
Of Moray, Mar, and Roderick Dhu,
All up in arms; — the Douglas too,
They mourned him pent within the hold,
'Where stout Earl William was of old.'[1]
And there his word the speaker stayed,
And finger on his lip he laid,
Or pointed to his dagger blade.
But jaded horsemen from the west
At evening to the Castle pressed,

[1] Stabbed by James II in Stirling Castle.

And busy talkers said they bore
Tidings of fight on Katrine's shore;
At noon the deadly fray begun,
And lasted till the set of sun.
Thus giddy rumour shook the town,
Till closed the Night her pennons brown.

CANTO SIXTH

THE GUARD-ROOM

I

THE sun, awakening, through the smoky air
Of the dark city casts a sullen glance,
Rousing each caitiff to his task of care,
Of sinful man the sad inheritance;
Summoning revellers from the lagging dance,
Scaring the prowling robber to his den;
Gilding on battled tower the warder's glance,
And warning student pale to leave his pen,
And yield his drowsy eyes to the kind nurse of men.

What various scenes, and O, what scenes of woe,
Are witnessed by that red and struggling beam!
The fevered patient, from his pallet low,
Through crowded hospital beholds it stream;
The ruined maiden trembles at its gleam,
The debtor wakes to thought of gyve and jail,
The love-lorn wretch starts from tormenting dream;
The wakeful mother, by the glimmering pale,
Trims her sick infant's couch, and soothes his feeble wail.

II

At dawn the towers of Stirling rang
With soldier-step and weapon-clang,

While drums with rolling note foretell
Relief to weary sentinel.
Through narrow loop and casement barred,
The sunbeams sought the Court of Guard,
And, struggling with the smoky air,
Deadened the torches' yellow glare.
In comfortless alliance shone
The lights through arch of blackened stone,
And showed wild shapes in garb of war,
Faces deformed with beard and scar,
All haggard from the midnight watch,
And fevered with the stern debauch;
For the oak table's massive board,
Flooded with wine, with fragments stored,
And beakers drained, and cups o'erthrown,
Showed in what sport the night had flown.
Some, weary, snored on floor and bench;
Some laboured still their thirst to quench;
Some, chilled with watching, spread their hands
O'er the huge chimney's dying brands,
While round them or beside them flung,
At every step their harness rung.

III

These drew not for their fields the sword,
Like tenants of a feudal lord,
Nor owned the patriarchal claim

Of Chieftain in their leader's name;
Adventurers they, from far who roved,[1]
To live by battle which they loved.
There the Italian's clouded face,
The swarthy Spaniard's there you trace;
The mountain-loving Switzer there
More freely breathed in mountain-air;
The Fleming there despised the soil
That paid so ill the labourer's toil;
Their rolls showed French and German name;
And merry England's exiles came,
To share, with ill-concealed disdain,
Of Scotland's pay the scanty gain.
All brave in arms, well-trained to wield
The heavy halberd, brand, and shield;
In camps licentious, wild, and bold;
In pillage fierce and uncontrolled;
And now, by holytide and feast,
From rules of discipline released.

IV

They held debate of bloody fray,
Fought 'twixt Loch Katrine and Achray.
Fierce was their speech, and mid their words
Their hands oft grappled to their swords;
Nor sunk their tone to spare the ear

[1] See Note 72.

Of wounded comrades groaning near,
Whose mangled limbs and bodies gored
Bore token of the mountain sword,
Though, neighbouring to the Court of Guard,
Their prayers and feverish wails were heard, —
Sad burden to the ruffian joke,
And savage oath by fury spoke! —
At length up started John of Brent,
A yeoman from the banks of Trent;
A stranger to respect or fear,
In peace a chaser of the deer,
In host a hardy mutineer,
But still the boldest of the crew
When deed of danger was to do.
He grieved that day their games cut short,
And marred the dicer's brawling sport,
And shouted loud, 'Renew the bowl!
And, while a merry catch I troll,
Let each the buxom chorus bear,
Like brethren of the brand and spear.'

V

SOLDIER'S SONG

Our vicar still preaches that Peter and Poule
Laid a swinging long curse on the bonny brown bowl,
That there's wrath and despair in the jolly black-jack,
And the seven deadly sins in a flagon of sack;

Yet whoop, Barnaby! off with thy liquor,
Drink upsees out, and a fig for the vicar!

Our vicar he calls it damnation to sip
The ripe ruddy dew of a woman's dear lip,
Says that Beelzebub lurks in her kerchief so sly,
And Apollyon shoots darts from her merry black eye;
Yet whoop, Jack! kiss Gillian the quicker,
Till she bloom like a rose, and a fig for the vicar!

Our vicar thus preaches, — and why should he not?
For the dues of his cure are the placket and pot;
And 't is right of his office poor laymen to lurch
Who infringe the domains of our good Mother Church.
Yet whoop, bully-boys! off with your liquor,
Sweet Marjorie's the word, and a fig for the vicar!

VI

The warder's challenge, heard without,
Stayed in mid-roar the merry shout.
A soldier to the portal went, —
'Here is old Bertram, sirs, of Ghent;
And — beat for jubilee the drum! —
A maid and minstrel with him come.'
Bertram, a Fleming, grey and scarred,
Was entering now the Court of Guard,
A harper with him, and, in plaid

All muffled close, a mountain maid,
Who backward shrunk to 'scape the view
Of the loose scene and boisterous crew.
'What news?' they roared: — 'I only know,
From noon till eve we fought with foe,
As wild and as untamable
As the rude mountains where they dwell;
On both sides store of blood is lost,
Nor much success can either boast.'
'But whence thy captives, friend? such spoil
As theirs must needs reward thy toil.
Old dost thou wax, and wars grow sharp;
Thou now hast glee-maiden and harp!
Get thee an ape, and trudge the land,
The leader of a juggler band.' [1]

VII

'No comrade; — no such fortune mine.
After the fight these sought our line,
That aged harper and the girl,
And, having audience of the Earl,
Mar bade I should purvey them steed,
And bring them hitherward with speed.
Forbear your mirth and rude alarm,
For none shall do them shame or harm.'
'Hear ye his boast?' cried John of Brent,

[1] See Note 73.

Ever to strife and jangling bent;
'Shall he strike doe beside our lodge,
And yet the jealous niggard grudge
To pay the forester his fee?
I'll have my share howe'er it be,
Despite of Moray, Mar, or thee.'
Bertram his forward step withstood;
And, burning in his vengeful mood,
Old Allan, though unfit for strife,
Laid hand upon his dagger-knife;
But Ellen boldly stepped between,
And dropped at once the tartan screen: —
So, from his morning cloud, appears
The sun of May through summer tears.
The savage soldiery, amazed,
As on descended angel gazed;
Even hardy Brent, abashed and tamed,
Stood half admiring, half ashamed.

VIII

Boldly she spoke: 'Soldiers, attend!
My father was the soldier's friend,
Cheered him in camps, in marches led,
And with him in the battle bled.
Not from the valiant or the strong
Should exile's daughter suffer wrong.'
Answered De Brent, most forward still

In every feat or good or ill:
'I shame me of the part I played;
And thou an outlaw's child, poor maid!
An outlaw I by forest laws,
And merry Needwood knows the cause.
Poor Rose, — if Rose be living now,' —
He wiped his iron eye and brow, —
'Must bear such age, I think, as thou.
Hear ye, my mates! I go to call
The Captain of our watch to hall:
There lies my halberd on the floor;
And he that steps my halberd o'er,
To do the maid injurious part,
My shaft shall quiver in his heart!
Beware loose speech, or jesting rough;
Ye all know John de Brent. Enough.'

IX

Their Captain came, a gallant young, —
Of Tullibardine's house he sprung, —
Nor wore he yet the spurs of knight;
Gay was his mien, his humour light,
And, though by courtesy controlled,
Forward his speech, his bearing bold.
The high-born maiden ill could brook
The scanning of his curious look
And dauntless eye: — and yet, in sooth,

Young Lewis was a generous youth;
But Ellen's lovely face and mien,
Ill suited to the garb and scene,
Might lightly bear construction strange,
And give loose fancy scope to range.
'Welcome to Stirling towers, fair maid!
Come ye to seek a champion's aid,
On palfrey white, with harper hoar,
Like errant damosel of yore?
Does thy high quest a knight require,
Or may the venture suit a squire?'
Her dark eye flashed; — she paused and sighed:—
'O what have I to do with pride! —
Through scenes of sorrow, shame, and strife,
A suppliant for a father's life,
I crave an audience of the King.
Behold, to back my suit, a ring,
The royal pledge of grateful claims,
Given by the Monarch to Fitz-James.'

X

The signet-ring young Lewis took
With deep respect and altered look,
And said: 'This ring our duties own;
And pardon, if to worth unknown,
In semblance mean obscurely veiled,
Lady, in aught my folly failed.

Soon as the day flings wide his gates,
The King shall know what suitor waits.
Please you meanwhile in fitting bower
Repose you till his waking hour;
Female attendance shall obey
Your hest, for service or array.
Permit I marshal you the way.'
But, ere she followed, with the grace
And open bounty of her race,
She bade her slender purse be shared
Among the soldiers of the guard.
The rest with thanks their guerdon took,
But Brent, with shy and awkward look,
On the reluctant maiden's hold
Forced bluntly back the proffered gold: —
'Forgive a haughty English heart,
And O, forget its ruder part!
The vacant purse shall be my share,
Which in my barret-cap I'll bear,
Perchance, in jeopardy of war,
Where gayer crests may keep afar.'
With thanks — 't was all she could — the maid
His rugged courtesy repaid.

XI

When Ellen forth with Lewis went,
Allan made suit to John of Brent: —

'My lady safe, O let your grace
Give me to see my master's face!
His minstrel I, — to share his doom
Bound from the cradle to the tomb.
Tenth in descent, since first my sires
Waked for his noble house their lyres,
Nor one of all the race was known
But prized its weal above their own.
With the Chief's birth begins our care;
Our harp must soothe the infant heir,
Teach the youth tales of fight, and grace
His earliest feat of field or chase;
In peace, in war, our rank we keep,
We cheer his board, we soothe his sleep,
Nor leave him till we pour our verse —
A doleful tribute! — o'er his hearse.
Then let me share his captive lot;
It is my right, — deny it not!'
'Little we reck,' said John of Brent,
'We Southern men, of long descent;
Nor wot we how a name — a word —
Makes clansmen vassals to a lord:
Yet kind my noble landlord's part, —
God bless the house of Beaudesert!
And, but I loved to drive the deer
More than to guide the labouring steer,
I had not dwelt an outcast here.

Come, good old Minstrel, follow me;
Thy Lord and Chieftain shalt thou see.'

XII

Then, from a rusted iron hook,
A bunch of ponderous keys he took,
Lighted a torch, and Allan led
Through grated arch and passage dread.
Portals they passed, where, deep within,
Spoke prisoner's moan and fetters' din;
Through rugged vaults, where, loosely stored,
Lay wheel, and axe, and headsman's sword,
And many a hideous engine grim,
For wrenching joint and crushing limb,
By artists formed who deemed it shame
And sin to give their work a name.
They halted at a low-browed porch,
And Brent to Allan gave the torch,
While bolt and chain he backward rolled,
And made the bar unhasp its hold.
They entered: — 't was a prison-room
Of stern security and gloom,
Yet not a dungeon; for the day
Through lofty gratings found its way,
And rude and antique garniture
Decked the sad walls and oaken floor,
Such as the rugged days of old

Deemed fit for captive noble's hold.
'Here,' said De Brent, 'thou mayst remain
Till the Leech visit him again.
Strict is his charge, the warders tell,
To tend the noble prisoner well.'
Retiring then the bolt he drew,
And the lock's murmurs growled anew.
Roused at the sound, from lowly bed
A captive feebly raised his head;
The wandering Minstrel looked, and knew —
Not his dear lord, but Roderick Dhu!
For, come from where Clan-Alpine fought,
They, erring, deemed the Chief he sought.

XIII

As the tall ship, whose lofty prore
Shall never stem the billows more,
Deserted by her gallant band,
Amid the breakers lies astrand, —
So on his couch lay Roderick Dhu!
And oft his fevered limbs he threw
In toss abrupt, as when her sides
Lie rocking in the advancing tides,
That shake her frame with ceaseless beat,
Yet cannot heave her from her seat; —
O, how unlike her course at sea!
Or his free step on hill and lea!

Soon as the Minstrel he could scan, —
'What of thy lady? — of my clan? —
My mother? — Douglas? — tell me all!
Have they been ruined in my fall?
Ah, yes! or wherefore art thou here?
Yet speak, — speak boldly, — do not fear.'
For Allan, who his mood well knew,
Was choked with grief and terror too.
'Who fought? — who fled? — Old man, be brief;
Some might, — for they had lost their Chief.
Who basely live? — who bravely died?'
'O, calm thee, Chief!' the Minstrel cried,
'Ellen is safe!' 'For that thank Heaven!'
'And hopes are for the Douglas given; —
The Lady Margaret, too, is well;
And, for thy clan, — on field or fell,
Has never harp of minstrel told
Of combat fought so true and bold.
Thy stately Pine is yet unbent,
Though many a goodly bough is rent.'

XIV

The Chieftain reared his form on high,
And fever's fire was in his eye;
But ghastly, pale, and livid streaks
Checkered his swarthy brow and cheeks.
'Hark, Minstrel! I have heard thee play,

With measure bold on festal day,
In yon lone isle, — again where ne'er
Shall harper play or warrior hear! —
That stirring air that peals on high,
O'er Dermid's race our victory.
Strike it! — and then, — for well thou canst, —
Free from thy minstrel-spirit glanced,
Fling me the picture of the fight,
When met my clan the Saxon might.[1]
I'll listen, till my fancy hears
The clang of swords, the crash of spears!
These grates, these walls, shall vanish then
For the fair field of fighting men,
And my free spirit burst away,
As if it soared from battle fray.'
The trembling Bard with awe obeyed, —
Slow on the harp his hand he laid;
But soon remembrance of the sight
He witnessed from the mountain's height,
With what old Bertram told at night,
Awakened the full power of song,
And bore him in career along; —
As shallop launched on river's tide,
That slow and fearful leaves the side,
But, when it feels the middle stream,
Drives downward swift as lightning's beam.

[1] See Note 74.

XV

BATTLE OF BEAL' AN DUINE[1]

'The Minstrel came once more to view
The eastern ridge of Benvenue,
For ere he parted he would say
Farewell to lovely Loch Achray —
Where shall he find, in foreign land,
So lone a lake, so sweet a strand! —
There is no breeze upon the fern,
No ripple on the lake,
Upon her eyry nods the erne,
The deer has sought the brake;
The small birds will not sing aloud,
The springing trout lies still,
So darkly glooms yon thunder-cloud,
That swathes, as with a purple shroud,
Benledi's distant hill.
Is it the thunder's solemn sound,
That mutters deep and dread,
Or echoes from the groaning ground
The warrior's measured tread?
Is it the lightning's quivering glance
That on the thicket streams,
Or do they flash on spear and lance
The sun's retiring beams?

[1] See Note 75.

I see the dagger-crest of Mar
I see the Moray's silver star,
Wave o'er the cloud of Saxon war,
That up the lake comes winding far!
To hero boune for battle-strife,
Or bard of martial lay,
'T were worth ten years of peaceful life,
One glance at their array!

XVI

'Their light-armed archers far and near
Surveyed the tangled ground,
Their centre ranks, with pike and spear,
A twilight forest frowned,
Their barded horsemen in the rear
The stern battalia crowned.
No symbol clashed, no clarion rang,
Still were the pipe and drum;
Save heavy tread, and armour's clang,
The sullen march was dumb.
There breathed no wind their crests to shake,
Or wave their flags abroad;
Scarce the frail aspen seemed to quake,
That shadowed o'er their road.
Their vaward scouts no tidings bring,
Can rouse no lurking foe,

Nor spy a trace of living thing,
Save when they stirred the roe;
The host moves like a deep-sea wave,
Where rise no rocks its pride to brave,
High-swelling, dark, and slow.
The lake is passed, and now they gain
A narrow and a broken plain,
Before the Trosachs' rugged jaws;
And here the horse and spearmen pause,
While, to explore the dangerous glen,
Dive through the pass the archer-men.

XVII

'At once there rose so wild a yell
Within that dark and narrow dell,
As all the fiends from heaven that fell
Had pealed the banner-cry of hell!
Forth from the pass in tumult driven,
Like chaff before the wind of heaven,
The archery appear:
For life! for life! their flight they ply —
And shriek, and shout, and battle-cry,
And plaids and bonnets waving high,
And broadswords flashing to the sky,
Are maddening in the rear.
Onward they drive in dreadful race,
Pursuers and pursued;

Before that tide of flight and chase,
How shall it keep its rooted place,
The spearmen's twilight wood?
"Down, down," cried Mar, "your lances down!
Bear back both friend and foe!"
Like reeds before the tempest's frown,
That serried grove of lances brown
At once lay levelled low;
And closely shouldering side to side,
The bristling ranks the onset bide.
"We'll quell the savage mountaineer,
As their Tinchel[1] cows the game!
They come as fleet as forest deer,
We'll drive them back as tame."

XVIII

'Bearing before them in their course
The relics of the archer force,
Like wave with crest of sparkling foam,
Right onward did Clan-Alpine come.
Above the tide, each broadsword bright
Was brandishing like beam of light,
Each targe was dark below;
And with the ocean's mighty swing,
When heaving to the tempest's wing,
They hurled them on the foe.

[1] See Note 76.

I heard the lance's shivering crash,
As when the whirlwind rends the ash;
I heard the broadsword's deadly clang,
As if a hundred anvils rang!
But Moray wheeled his rearward rank
Of horsemen on Clan-Alpine's flank, —
"My banner-men, advance!
I see," he cried, "their column shake.
Now, gallants! for your ladies' sake,
Upon them with the lance!"
The horsemen dashed among the rout,
As deer break through the broom;
Their steeds are stout, their swords are out,
They soon make lightsome room.
Clan-Alpine's best are backward borne —
Where, where was Roderick then!
One blast upon his bugle-horn
Were worth a thousand men.
And refluent through the pass of fear
The battle's tide was poured;
Vanished the Saxon's struggling spear,
Vanished the mountain-sword.
As Bracklinn's chasm, so black and steep,
Receives her roaring linn,
As the dark caverns of the deep
Suck the wild whirlpool in,

So did the deep and darksome pass
Devour the battle's mingled mass;
None linger now upon the plain,
Save those who ne'er shall fight again.

XIX

'Now westward rolls the battle's din,
That deep and doubling pass within. —
Minstrel, away! the work of fate
Is bearing on; its issue wait,
Where the rude Trosachs' dread defile
Opens on Katrine's lake and isle.
Gray Benvenue I soon repassed,
Loch Katrine lay beneath me cast.
The sun is set; — the clouds are met,
The lowering scowl of heaven
An inky hue of livid blue
To the deep lake has given;
Strange gusts of wind from mountain glen
Swept o'er the lake, then sunk again.
I heeded not the eddying surge,
Mine eye but saw the Trosachs' gorge,
Mine ear but heard that sullen sound,
Which like an earthquake shook the ground,
And spoke the stern and desperate strife
That parts not but with parting life,

Seeming, to minstrel ear, to toll
The dirge of many a passing soul.
Nearer it comes — the dim-wood glen
The martial flood disgorged again,
But not in mingled tide;
The plaided warriors of the North
High on the mountain thunder forth
And overhang its side,
While by the lake below appears
The darkening cloud of Saxon spears.
At weary bay each shattered band,
Eying their foemen, sternly stand;
Their banners stream like tattered sail,
That flings its fragments to the gale,
And broken arms and disarray
Marked the fell havoc of the day.

XX

'Viewing the mountain's ridge askance,
The Saxons stood in sullen trance,
Till Moray pointed with his lance,
And cried: "Behold yon isle! —
See! none are left to guard its strand
But women weak, that wring the hand:
'T is there of yore the robber band
Their booty wont to pile; —

My purse, with bonnet-pieces store,
To him will swim a bow-shot o'er,
And loose a shallop from the shore.
Lightly we'll tame the war-wolf then,
Lords of his mate, and brood, and den."
Forth from the ranks a spearman sprung,
On earth his casque and corselet rung,
He plunged him in the wave: —
All saw the deed, — the purpose knew,
And to their clamours Benvenue
A mingled echo gave;
The Saxons shout, their mate to cheer,
The helpless females scream for fear,
And yells for rage the mountaineer.
'T was then, as by the outcry riven,
Poured down at once the lowering heaven:
A whirlwind swept Loch Katrine's breast,
Her billows reared their snowy crest.
Well for the swimmer swelled they high,
To mar the Highland marksman's eye;
For round him showered, mid rain and hail,
The vengeful arrows of the Gael.
In vain. — He nears the isle — and lo!
His hand is on a shallop's bow.
Just then a flash of lightning came,
It tinged the waves and strand with flame;
I marked Duncraggan's widowed dame,

Behind an oak I saw her stand,
A naked dirk gleamed in her hand: —
It darkened, — but amid the moan
Of waves I heard a dying groan; —
Another flash! — the spearman floats
A weltering corse beside the boats,
And the stern matron o'er him stood,
Her hand and dagger streaming blood. .

XXI

'"Revenge! revenge!" the Saxons cried,
The Gaels' exulting shout replied.
Despite the elemental rage,
Again they hurried to engage;
But, ere they closed in desperate fight,
Bloody with spurring came a knight,
Sprung from his horse, and from a crag
Waved 'twixt the hosts a milk-white flag.
Clarion and trumpet by his side
Rung forth a truce-note high and wide,
While, in the Monarch's name, afar
A herald's voice forbade the war,
For Bothwell's lord and Roderick bold
Were both, he said, in captive hold.' —
But here the lay made sudden stand,
The harp escaped the Minstrel's hand!
Oft had he stolen a glance, to spy

How Roderick brooked his minstrelsy:
At first, the Chieftain, to the chime,
With lifted hand kept feeble time;
That motion ceased, — yet feeling strong
Varied his look as changed the song;
At length, no more his deafened ear
The minstrel melody can hear;
His face grows sharp, — his hands are clenched,
As if some pang his heart-strings wrenched;
Set are his teeth, his fading eye
Is sternly fixed on vacancy;
Thus, motionless and moanless drew,
His parting breath stout Roderick Dhu! —
Old Allan-bane looked on aghast,
While grim and still his spirit passed;
But when he saw that life was fled,
He poured his wailing o'er the dead.

XXII

LAMENT

'And art thou cold and lowly laid,
Thy foeman's dread, thy people's aid,
Breadalbane's boast, Clan-Alpine's shade!
For thee shall none a requiem say? —
For thee, who loved the minstrel's lay,
For thee, of Bothwell's house the stay,

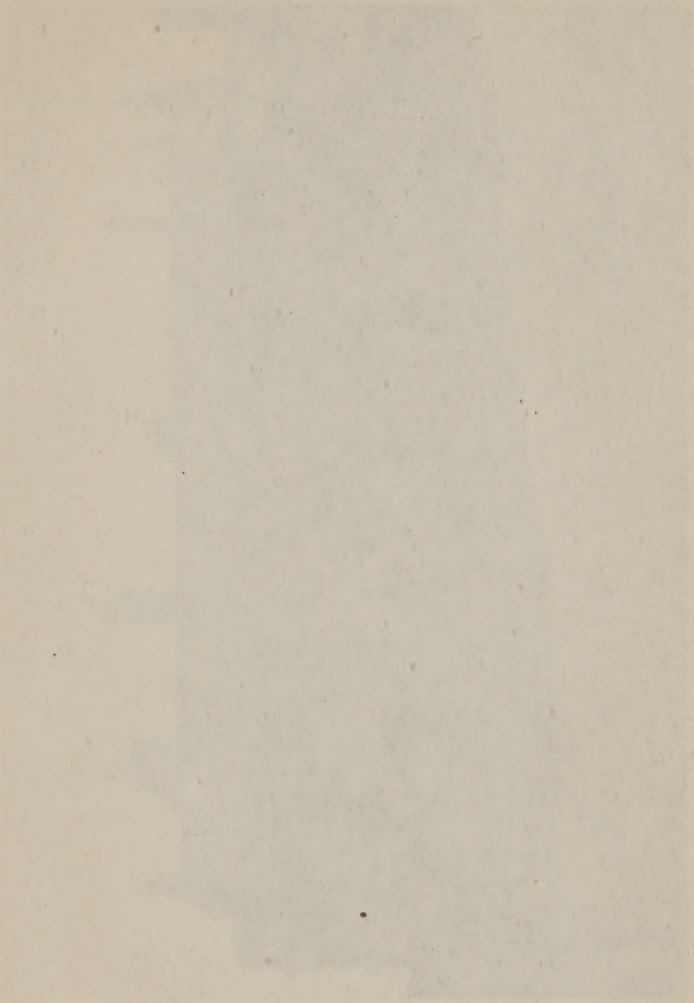
The shelter of her exiled line,
E'en in this prison-house of thine,
I'll wail for Alpine's honoured Pine!

'What groans shall yonder valleys fill!
What shrieks of grief shall rend yon hill!
What tears of burning rage shall thrill,
When mourns thy tribe thy battles done,
Thy fall before the race was won,
Thy sword ungirt ere set of sun!
There breathes not clansman of thy line,
But would have given his life for thine.
O, woe for Alpine's honoured Pine!

'Sad was thy lot on mortal stage! —
The captive thrush may brook the cage,
The prisoned eagle dies for rage.
Brave spirit, do not scorn my strain!
And, when its notes awake again,
Even she, so long beloved in vain,
Shall with my harp her voice combine,
And mix her woe and tears with mine,
To wail Clan-Alpine's honoured Pine.'

XXIII

Ellen the while, with bursting heart,
Remained in lordly bower apart,
Where played, with many-coloured gleams,



Stirling Castle, the Palace

Through storied pane the rising beams.
In vain on gilded roof they fall,
And lightened up a tapestried wall,
And for her use a menial train
A rich collation spread in vain.
The banquet proud, the chamber gay,
Scarce drew one curious glance astray;
Or if she looked, 't was but to say,
With better omen dawned the day
In that lone isle, where waved on high
The dun-deer's hide for canopy;
Where oft her noble father shared
The simple meal her care prepared,
While Lufra, crouching by her side,
Her station claimed with jealous pride,
And Douglas, bent on woodland game,
Spoke of the chase to Malcolm Græme,
Whose answer, oft at random made,
The wandering of his thoughts betrayed.
Those who such simple joys have known
Are taught to prize them when they're gone.
But sudden, see, she lifts her head,
The window seeks with cautious tread.
What distant music has the power
To win her in this woful hour?
'T was from a turret that o'erhung
Her latticed bower, the strain was sung.

XXIV

LAY OF THE IMPRISONED HUNTSMAN

'My hawk is tired of perch and hood,
My idle greyhound loathes his food,
My horse is weary of his stall,
And I am sick of captive thrall.
I wish I were as I have been,
Hunting the hart in forest green,
With bended bow and bloodhound free,
For that's the life is meet for me.

'I hate to learn the ebb of time
From yon dull steeple's drowsy chime,
Or mark it as the sunbeams crawl,
Inch after inch, along the wall.
The lark was wont my matins ring,
The sable rook my vespers sing,
These towers, although a king's they be,
Have not a hall of joy for me.

'No more at dawning morn I rise,
And sun myself in Ellen's eyes,
Drive the fleet deer the forest through,
And homeward wend with evening dew;
A blithesome welcome blithely meet,
And lay my trophies at her feet,

While fled the eve on wing of glee, —
That life is lost to love and me!'

XXV

The heart-sick lay was hardly said,
The listener had not turned her head,
It trickled still, the starting tear,
When light a footstep struck her ear,
And Snowdoun's graceful Knight was near.
She turned the hastier, lest again
The prisoner should renew his strain.
'O welcome, brave Fitz-James!' she said;
'How may an almost orphan maid
Pay the deep debt —' 'O say not so!
To me no gratitude you owe.
Not mine, alas! the boon to give,
And bid thy noble father live;
I can but be thy guide, sweet maid,
With Scotland's King thy suit to aid.
No tyrant he, though ire and pride
May lay his better mood aside.
Come, Ellen, come! 't is more than time,
He holds his court at morning prime.'
With beating heart, and bosom wrung,
As to a brother's arm she clung.
Gently he dried the falling tear,
And gently whispered hope and cheer;

Her faltering steps half led, half stayed,
Through gallery fair and high arcade,
Till at his touch its wings of pride
A portal arch unfolded wide.

XXVI

Within 't was brilliant all and light,
A throngíng scene of figures bright;
It glowed on Ellen's dazzled sight,
As when the setting sun has given
Ten thousand hues to summer even,
And from their tissue fancy frames
Aerial knights and fairy dames.
Still by Fitz-James her footing staid;
A few faint steps she forward made,
Then slow her drooping head she raised,
And fearful round the presence gazed;
For him she sought who owned this state,
The dreaded Prince whose will was fate! —
She gazed on many a princely port
Might well have ruled a royal court;
On many a splendid garb she gazed, —
Then turned bewildered and amazed,
For all stood bare; and in the room
Fitz-James alone wore cap and plume.
To him each lady's look was lent,
On him each courtier's eye was bent;

Midst furs and silks and jewels sheen,
He stood, in simple Lincoln green,
The centre of the glittering ring, —
And Snowdoun's Knight is Scotland's King![1]

XXVII

As wreath of snow on mountain-breast
Slides from the rock that gave it rest,
Poor Ellen glided from her stay,
And at the Monarch's feet she lay;
No word her choking voice commands, —
She showed the ring, — she clasped her hands.
O, not a moment could he brook,
The generous Prince, that suppliant look!
Gently he raised her, — and, the while,
Checked with a glance the circle's smile;
Graceful, but grave, her brow he kissed,
And bade her terrors be dismissed: —
'Yes, fair; the wandering poor Fitz-James
The fealty of Scotland claims.
To him thy woes, thy wishes, bring;
He will redeem his signet ring.
Ask nought for Douglas; — yester even,
His Prince and he have much forgiven;
Wrong hath he had from slanderous tongue,
I, from his rebel kinsmen, wrong.

[1] See Note 77.

We would not, to the vulgar crowd,
Yield what they craved with clamour loud;
Calmly we heard and judged his cause,
Our council aided and our laws.
I staunched thy father's death-feud stern
With stout De Vaux and gray Glencairn;
And Bothwell's Lord henceforth we own
The friend and bulwark of our throne. —
But, lovely infidel, how now?
What clouds thy misbelieving brow?
Lord James of Douglas, lend thine aid;
Thou must confirm this doubting maid.'

XXVIII

Then forth the noble Douglas sprung,
And on his neck his daughter hung.
The Monarch drank, that happy hour,
The sweetest, holiest draught of Power, —
When it can say with godlike voice,
Arise, sad Virtue, and rejoice!
Yet would not James the general eye
On nature's raptures long should pry;
He stepped between — 'Nay, Douglas, nay,
Steal not my proselyte away!
The riddle 't is my right to read,
That brought this happy chance to speed.

Yes, Ellen, when disguised I stray
In life's more low but happier way,
'T is under name which veils my power,
Nor falsely veils, — for Stirling's tower
Of yore the name of Snowdoun claims,[1]
And Normans call me James Fitz-James.
Thus watch I o'er insulted laws,
Thus learn to right the injured cause.'
Then, in a tone apart and low, —
'Ah, little traitress! none must know
What idle dream, what lighter thought,
What vanity full dearly bought,
Joined to thine eye's dark witchcraft, drew
My spell-bound steps to Benvenue
In dangerous hour, and all but gave
Thy Monarch's life to mountain glaive!'
Aloud he spoke: 'Thou still dost hold
That little talisman of gold,
Pledge of my faith, Fitz-James's ring, —
What seeks fair Ellen of the King?'

XXIX

Full well the conscious maiden guessed
He probed the weakness of her breast;
But with that consciousness there came
A lightening of her fears for Græme,

[1] See Note 78.

And more she deemed the Monarch's ire
Kindled 'gainst him who for her sire
Rebellious broadsword boldly drew;
And, to her generous feeling true,
She craved the grace of Roderick Dhu.
'Forbear thy suit; — the King of kings
Alone can stay life's parting wings.
I know his heart, I know his hand,
Have shared his cheer, and proved his brand; —
My fairest earldom would I give
To bid Clan-Alpine's Chieftain live! —
Hast thou no other boon to crave?
No other captive friend to save?'
Blushing, she turned her from the King,
And to the Douglas gave the ring,
As if she wished her sire to speak
The suit that stained her glowing cheek.
'Nay, then, my pledge has lost its force,
And stubborn justice holds her course.
Malcolm, come forth!' — and, at the word,
Down kneeled the Græme to Scotland's Lord.
'For thee, rash youth, no suppliant sues,
From thee may Vengeance claim her dues,
Who, nurtured underneath our smile,
Hast paid our care by treacherous wile,
And sought amid thy faithful clan
A refuge for an outlawed man,

Dishonouring thus thy loyal name. —
Fetters and warder for the Græme!'
His chain of gold the King unstrung,
The links o'er Malcolm's neck he flung,
Then gently drew the glittering band,
And laid the clasp on Ellen's hand.

HARP of the North, farewell! The hills grow dark,
On purple peaks a deeper shade descending;
In twilight copse the glow-worm lights her spark,
The deer, half-seen, are to the covert wending.
Resume thy wizard elm! the fountain lending,
And the wild breeze, thy wilder minstrelsy;
Thy numbers sweet with nature's vespers blending,
With distant echo from the fold and lea,
And herd-boy's evening pipe, and hum of housing bee.

Yet, once again, farewell, thou Minstrel Harp!
Yet, once again, forgive my feeble sway,
And little reck I of the censure sharp
May idly cavil at an idle lay.
Much have I owed thy strains on life's long way,
Through secret woes the world has never known,
When on the weary night dawned wearier day,
And bitterer was the grief devoured alone. —
That I o'erlive such woes, Enchantress! is thine own.

Hark! as my lingering footsteps slow retire,
Some Spirit of the Air has waked thy string!
'T is now a seraph bold, with touch of fire,
'T is now the brush of Fairy's frolic wing.
Receding now, the dying numbers ring
Fainter and fainter down the rugged dell;
And now the mountain breezes scarcely bring
A wandering witch-note of the distant spell —
And now, 't is silent all! — Enchantress, fare thee well!

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS

A POEM IN SIX CANTOS

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS

INTRODUCTION

THERE is a mood of mind we all have known
On drowsy eve or dark and lowering day,
When the tired spirits lose their sprightly tone
And nought can chase the lingering hours away.
Dull on our soul falls Fancy's dazzling ray,
And Wisdom holds his steadier torch in vain,
Obscured the painting seems, mistuned the lay,
Nor dare we of our listless load complain,
For who for sympathy may seek that cannot tell of pain?

The jolly sportsman knows such drearihood
When bursts in deluge the autumnal rain,
Clouding that morn which threats the heath-cock's brood;
Of such in summer's drought the anglers plain,
Who hope the soft mild southern shower in vain;
But more than all the discontented fair,
Whom father stern and sterner aunt restrain
From county-ball or race occurring rare,
While all her friends around their vestments gay prepare.

Ennui! — or, as our mothers called thee, Spleen!
To thee we owe full many a rare device;—
Thine is the sheaf of painted cards, I ween,
The rolling billiard-ball, the rattling dice,
The turning lathe for framing gimcrack nice;
The amateur's blotched pallet thou mayst claim,
Retort, and air-pump, threatening frogs and mice —
Murders disguised by philosophic name —
And much of trifling grave and much of buxom game.

Then of the books to catch thy drowsy glance
Compiled, what bard the catalogue may quote!
Plays, poems, novels, never read but once; —
But not of such the tale fair Edgeworth wrote,
That bears thy name and is thine antidote;
And not of such the strain my Thomson sung,
Delicious dreams inspiring by his note,
What time to Indolence his harp he strung; —
O, might my lay be ranked that happier list among!

Each hath his refuge whom thy cares assail.
For me, I love my study-fire to trim,
And con right vacantly some idle tale,
Displaying on the couch each listless limb,
Till on the drowsy page the lights grow dim
And doubtful slumber half supplies the theme;
While antique shapes of knight and giant grim,

Damsel and dwarf, in long procession gleam,
And the romancer's tale becomes the reader's dream.

'T is thus my malady I well may bear,
Albeit outstretched, like Pope's own Paridel,
Upon the rack of a too-easy chair;
And find to cheat the time a powerful spell
In old romaunts of errantry that tell,
Or later legends of the Fairy-folk,
Or Oriental tale of Afrite fell,
Of Genii, Talisman, and broad-winged Roc,
Though taste may blush and frown, and sober reason
mock.

Oft at such season too will rhymes unsought
Arrange themselves in some romantic lay,
The which, as things unfitting graver thought,
Are burnt or blotted on some wiser day.
These few survive — and, proudly let me say,
Court not the critic's smile nor dread his frown;
They well may serve to while an hour away,
Nor does the volume ask for more renown
Than Ennui's yawning smile, what time she drops it
down.

CANTO FIRST

I

LIST to the valorous deeds that were done
By Harold the Dauntless, Count Witikind's son!

Count Witikind came of a regal strain,
And roved with his Norsemen the land and the main.
Woe to the realms which he coasted! for there
Was shedding of blood and rending of hair,
Rape of maiden and slaughter of priest,
Gathering of ravens and wolves to the feast:
When he hoisted his standard black,
Before him was battle, behind him wrack,
And he burned the churches, that heathen Dane,
To light his band to their barks again.

II

On Erin's shores was his outrage known,
The winds of France had his banners blown;
Little was there to plunder, yet still
His pirates had forayed on Scottish hill:
But upon merry England's coast
More frequent he sailed, for he won the most.

So wide and so far his ravage they knew,
If a sail but gleamed white 'gainst the welkin blue,
Trumpet and bugle to arms did call,
Burghers hastened to man the wall,
Peasants fled inland his fury to 'scape,
Beacons were lighted on headland and cape,
Bells were tolled out, and aye as they rung
Fearful and faintly the grey brothers sung,
'Bless us, Saint Mary, from flood and from fire,
From famine and pest, and Count Witikind's ire!'

III

He liked the wealth of fair England so well
That he sought in her bosom as native to dwell.
He entered the Humber in fearful hour
And disembarked with his Danish power.
Three earls came against him with all their train, —
Two hath he taken and one hath he slain.
Count Witikind left the Humber's rich strand,
And he wasted and warred in Northumberland.
But the Saxon king was a sire in age,
Weak in battle, in council sage;
Peace of that heathen leader he sought,
Gifts he gave and quiet he bought;
And the count took upon him the peaceable style
Of a vassal and liegeman of Briton's broad isle.

IV

Time will rust the sharpest sword,
Time will consume the strongest cord;
That which moulders hemp and steel
Mortal arm and nerve must feel.
Of the Danish band whom Count Witikind led
Many waxed aged and many were dead:
Himself found his armour full weighty to bear,
Wrinkled his brows grew and hoary his hair;
He leaned on a staff when his step went abroad,
And patient his palfrey when steed he bestrode.
As he grew feebler, his wildness ceased,
He made himself peace with prelate and priest,
Made his peace, and stooping his head,
Patiently listed the counsel they said:
Saint Cuthbert's Bishop was holy and grave,
Wise and good was the counsel he gave.

V

'Thou hast murdered, robbed, and spoiled,
Time it is thy poor soul were assoiled;
Priests didst thou slay and churches burn,
Time it is now to repentance to turn;
Fiends hast thou worshipped with fiendish rite,
Leave now the darkness and wend into light;

O, while life and space are given,
Turn thee yet, and think of Heaven!'
That stern old heathen his head he raised,
And on the good prelate he steadfastly gazed;
'Give me broad lands on the Wear and the Tyne,
My faith I will leave and I'll cleave unto thine.'

VI

Broad lands he gave him on Tyne and Wear,
To be held of the church by bridle and spear,
Part of Monkwearmouth, of Tynedale part,
To better his will and to soften his heart:
Count Witikind was a joyful man,
Less for the faith than the lands that he wan.
The high church of Durham is dressed for the day,
The clergy are ranked in their solemn array:
There came the count, in a bear-skin warm,
Leaning on Hilda his concubine's arm.
He kneeled before Saint Cuthbert's shrine
With patience unwonted at rites divine;
He abjured the gods of heathen race
And he bent his head at the font of grace.
But such was the grisly old proselyte's look,
That the priest who baptised him grew pale and shook;
And the old monks muttered beneath their hood,
'Of a stem so stubborn can never spring good!'

VII

Up then arose that grim convertite,
Homeward he hied him when ended the rite;
The prelate in honour will with him ride
And feast in his castle on Tyne's fair side.
Banners and banderols danced in the wind,
Monks rode before them and spearmen behind;
Onward they passed, till fairly did shine
Pennon and cross on the bosom of Tyne;
And full in front did that fortress lour
In darksome strength with its buttress and tower:
At the castle gate was young Harold there,
Count Witikind's only offspring and heir.

VIII

Young Harold was feared for his hardihood,
His strength of frame and his fury of mood.
Rude he was and wild to behold,
Wore neither collar nor bracelet of gold,
Cap of vair nor rich array,
Such as should grace that festal day:
His doublet of bull's hide was all unbraced,
Uncovered his head and his sandal unlaced:
His shaggy black locks on his brow hung low,
And his eyes glanced through them a swarthy glow;
A Danish club in his hand he bore,

The spikes were clotted with recent gore;
At his back a she-wolf and her wolf-cubs twain,
In the dangerous chase that morning slain.
Rude was the greeting his father he made,
None to the bishop, — while thus he said: —

IX

'What priest-led hypocrite art thou
With thy humbled look and thy monkish brow,
Like a shaveling who studies to cheat his vow?
Canst thou be Witikind the Waster known,
Royal Eric's fearless son,
Haughty Gunhilda's haughtier lord,
Who won his bride by the axe and sword;
From the shrine of Saint Peter the chalice who tore,
And melted to bracelets for Freya and Thor;
With one blow of his gauntlet who burst the skull,
Before Odin's stone, of the Mountain Bull?
Then ye worshipped with rites that to war-gods belong,
With the deed of the brave and the blow of the strong;
And now, in thine age to dotage sunk,
Wilt thou patter thy crimes to a shaven monk,
Lay down thy mail-shirt for clothing of hair, —
Fasting and scourge, like a slave, wilt thou bear?
Or, at best, be admitted in slothful bower
To batten with priest and with paramour?
O, out upon thine endless shame!

Each Scald's high harp shall blast thy fame,
And thy son will refuse thee a father's name!'

X

Ireful waxed old Witikind's look,
His faltering voice with fury shook: —
'Hear me, Harold of hardened heart!
Stubborn and wilful ever thou wert.
Thine outrage insane I command thee to cease,
Fear my wrath and remain at peace: —
Just is the debt of repentance I've paid,
Richly the church has a recompense made,
And the truth of her doctrines I prove with my blade,
But reckoning to none of my actions I owe,
And least to my son such accounting will show.
Why speak I to thee of repentance or truth,
Who ne'er from thy childhood knew reason or ruth?
Hence! to the wolf and the bear in her den;
These are thy mates, and not rational men.'

XI

Grimly smiled Harold and coldly replied,
'We must honour our sires, if we fear when they chide.
For me, I am yet what thy lessons have made,
I was rocked in a buckler and fed from a blade;
An infant, was taught to clasp hands and to shout

From the roofs of the tower when the flame had broke
out;
In the blood of slain foemen my finger to dip,
And tinge with its purple my cheek and my lip.
'T is thou know'st not truth, that hast bartered in eld
For a price the brave faith that thine ancestors held.
When this wolf' — and the carcass he flung on the
plain —
'Shall awake and give food to her nurslings again,
The face of his father will Harold review;
Till then, aged heathen, young Christian, adieu!'

XII

Priest, monk, and prelate stood aghast,
As through the pageant the heathen passed.
A cross-bearer out of his saddle he flung,
Laid his hand on the pommel and into it sprung.
Loud was the shriek and deep the groan
When the holy sign on the earth was thrown!
The fierce old count unsheathed his brand,
But the calmer prelate stayed his hand.
'Let him pass free! — Heaven knows its hour, —
But he must own repentance's power,
Pray and weep, and penance bear,
Ere he hold land by the Tyne and the Wear.'
Thus in scorn and in wrath from his father is gone
Young Harold the Dauntless, Count Witikind's son.

XIII

High was the feasting in Witikind's hall,
Revelled priests, soldiers, and pagans, and all;
And e'en the good bishop was fain to endure
The scandal which time and instruction might cure:
It were dangerous, he deemed, at the first to restrain
In his wine and his wassail a half-christened Dane.
The mead flowed around and the ale was drained dry,
Wild was the laughter, the song, and the cry;
With Kyrie Eleison came clamorously in
The war-songs of Danesmen, Norweyan, and Finn,
Till man after man the contention gave o'er,
Outstretched on the rushes that strewed the hall floor;
And the tempest within, having ceased its wild rout,
Gave place to the tempest that thundered without.

XIV

Apart from the wassail in turret alone
Lay flaxen-haired Gunnar, old Ermengarde's son;
In the train of Lord Harold that page was the first,
For Harold in childhood had Ermengarde nursed;
And grieved was young Gunnar his master should roam,
Unhoused and unfriended, an exile from home.
He heard the deep thunder, the plashing of rain,
He saw the red lightning through shot-hole and pane;

'And O!' said the page, 'on the shelterless wold
Lord Harold is wandering in darkness and cold!
What though he was stubborn and wayward and wild,
He endured me because I was Ermengarde's child,
And often from dawn till the set of the sun
In the chase by his stirrup unbidden I run;
I would I were older, and knighthood could bear,
I would soon quit the banks of the Tyne and the
Wear:
For my mother's command with her last parting breath
Bade me follow her nursling in life and to death.

XV

'It pours and it thunders, it lightens amain,
As if Lok the Destroyer had burst from his chain!
Accursed by the church and expelled by his sire,
Nor Christian nor Dane give him shelter or fire,
And this tempest what mortal may houseless endure?
Unaided, unmantled, he dies on the moor!
Whate'er comes of Gunnar, he tarries not here.'
He leapt from his couch and he grasped to his spear,
Sought the hall of the feast. Undisturbed by his tread,
The wassailers slept fast as the sleep of the dead:
'Ungrateful and bestial!' his anger broke forth,
'To forget 'mid your goblets the pride of the North!
And you, ye cowled priests, who have plenty in store,
Must give Gunnar for ransom a palfrey and ore.'

XVI

Then, heeding full little of ban or of curse,
He has seized on the Prior of Jorvaux's purse:
Saint Meneholt's Abbot next morning has missed
His mantle, deep furred from the cape to the wrist:
The seneschal's keys from his belt he has ta'en —
Well drenched on that eve was old Hildebrand's brain —
To the stable-yard he made his way
And mounted the bishop's palfrey gay,
Castle and hamlet behind him has cast
And right on his way to the moorland has passed.
Sore snorted the palfrey, unused to face
A weather so wild at so rash a pace;
So long he snorted, so long he neighed,
There answered a steed that was bound beside,
And the red flash of lightning showed there where lay
His master, Lord Harold, outstretched on the clay.

XVII

Up he started and thundered out, 'Stand!'
And raised the club in his deadly hand.
The flaxen-haired Gunnar his purpose told,
Showed the palfrey and proffered the gold.
'Back, back, and home, thou simple boy!
Thou canst not share my grief or joy:

Have I not marked thee wail and cry
When thou hast seen a sparrow die?
And canst thou, as my follower should,
Wade ankle-deep through foeman's blood,
Dare mortal and immortal foe,
The gods above, the fiends below,
And man on earth, more hateful still,
The very fountain-head of ill?
Desperate of life and careless of death,
Lover of bloodshed and slaughter and scathe,
Such must thou be with me to roam,
And such thou canst not be — back, and home!'

XVIII

Young Gunnar shook like an aspen bough,
As he heard the harsh voice and beheld the dark brow,
And half he repented his purpose and vow.
But now to draw back were bootless shame,
And he loved his master, so urged his claim:
'Alas! if my arm and my courage be weak,
Bear with me awhile for old Ermengarde's sake;
Nor deem so lightly of Gunnar's faith
As to fear he would break it for peril of death.
Have I not risked it to fetch thee this gold,
This surcoat and mantle to fence thee from cold?
And, did I bear a baser mind,
What lot remains if I stay behind?

The priests' revenge, thy father's wrath,
A dungeon, and a shameful death.'

XIX

With gentler look Lord Harold eyed
The page, then turned his head aside;
And either a tear did his eyelash stain,
Or it caught a drop of the passing rain.
'Art thou an outcast, then?' quoth he;
'The meeter page to follow me.'
'T were bootless to tell what climes they sought,
Ventures achieved, and battles fought;
How oft with few, how oft alone,
Fierce Harold's arm the field hath won.
Men swore his eye, that flashed so red
When each other glance was quenched with dread,
Bore oft a light of deadly flame
That ne'er from mortal courage came.
Those limbs so strong, that mood so stern,
That loved the couch of heath and fern,
Afar from hamlet, tower, and town,
More than to rest on driven down;
That stubborn frame, that sullen mood,
Men deemed must come of aught but good;
And they whispered the great Master Fiend was at one
With Harold the Dauntless, Count Witikind's son.

XX

Years after years had gone and fled,
The good old prelate lies lapped in lead;
In the chapel still is shown
His sculptured form on a marble stone,
With staff and ring and scapulaire,
And folded hands in the act of prayer.
Saint Cuthbert's mitre is resting now
On the haughty Saxon, bold Aldingar's brow;
The power of his crosier he loved to extend
O'er whatever would break or whatever would bend;
And now hath he clothed him in cope and in pall,
And the Chapter of Durham has met at his call.
'And hear ye not, brethren,' the proud bishop said,
'That our vassal, the Danish Count Witikind 's dead?
All his gold and his goods hath he given
To holy Church for the love of Heaven,
And hath founded a chantry with stipend and dole
That priests and that beadsmen may pray for his soul:
Harold his son is wandering abroad,
Dreaded by man and abhorred by God;
Meet it is not that such should heir
The lands of the Church on the Tyne and the Wear,
And at her pleasure her hallowed hands
May now resume these wealthy lands.'

XXI

Answered good Eustace, a canon old, —
'Harold is tameless and furious and bold;
Ever Renown blows a note of fame
And a note of fear when she sounds his name:
Much of bloodshed and much of scathe
Have been their lot who have waked his wrath.
Leave him these lands and lordships still,
Heaven in its hour may change his will;
But if reft of gold and of living bare,
An evil counsellor is despair.'
More had he said, but the prelate frowned,
And murmured his brethren who sate around,
And with one consent have they given their doom
That the Church should the lands of Saint Cuthbert resume.
So willed the prelate; and canon and dean
Gave to his judgment their loud amen.

CANTO SECOND

I

'T is merry in greenwood — thus runs the old lay —
In the gladsome month of lively May,
When the wild birds' song on stem and spray
  Invites to forest bower;
Then rears the ash his airy crest,
Then shines the birch in silver vest,
And the beech in glistening leaves is drest,
And dark between shows the oak's proud breast
  Like a chieftain's frowning tower;
Though a thousand branches join their screen,
Yet the broken sunbeams glance between
And tip the leaves with lighter green,
  With brighter tints the flower:
Dull is the heart that loves not then
The deep recess of the wildwood glen,
Where roe and red-deer find sheltering den
  When the sun is in his power.

II

Less merry perchance is the fading leaf
That follows so soon on the gathered sheaf
  When the greenwood loses the name;

Silent is then the forest bound,
Save the redbreast's note and the rustling sound
Of frost-nipt leaves that are dropping round,
Or the deep-mouthed cry of the distant hound
That opens on his game:
Yet then too I love the forest wide,
Whether the sun in splendour ride
And gild its many-coloured side,
Or whether the soft and silvery haze
In vapoury folds o'er the landscape strays,
And half involves the woodland maze,
Like an early widow's veil,
Where wimpling tissue from the gaze
The form half hides and half betrays
Of beauty wan and pale.

III

Fair Metelill was a woodland maid,
Her father a rover of greenwood shade,
By forest statutes undismayed,
Who lived by bow and quiver;
Well known was Wulfstane's archery
By merry Tyne both on moor and lea,
Through wooded Weardale's glens so free,
Well beside Stanhope's wildwood tree,
And well on Ganlesse river.
Yet free though he trespassed on woodland game,

More known and more feared was the wizard fame
Of Jutta of Rookhope, the Outlaw's dame;
Feared when she frowned was her eye of flame,
More feared when in wrath she laughed;
For then, 't was said, more fatal true
To its dread aim her spell-glance flew
Than when from Wulfstane's bended yew
Sprung forth the grey-goose shaft.

IV

Yet had this fierce and dreaded pair,
So Heaven decreed, a daughter fair;
None brighter crowned the bed,
In Britain's bounds, of peer or prince,
Nor hath perchance a lovelier since
In this fair isle been bred.
And nought of fraud or ire or ill
Was known to gentle Metelill, —
A simple maiden she;
The spells in dimpled smile that lie,
And a downcast blush, and the darts that fly
With the sidelong glance of a hazel eye,
Were her arms and witchery.
So young, so simple was she yet,
She scarce could childhood's joys forget,
And still she loved, in secret set
Beneath the greenwood tree,

To plait the rushy coronet
And braid with flowers her locks of jet,
As when in infancy; —
Yet could that heart so simple prove
The early dawn of stealing love:
Ah! gentle maid, beware!
The power who, now so mild a guest,
Gives dangerous yet delicious zest
To the calm pleasures of thy breast,
Will soon, a tyrant o'er the rest,
Let none his empire share.

V

One morn in kirtle green arrayed
Deep in the wood the maiden strayed,
And where a fountain sprung
She sate her down unseen to thread
The scarlet berry's mimic braid,
And while the beads she strung,
Like the blithe lark whose carol gay
Gives a good-morrow to the day,
So lightsomely she sung.

VI

SONG

'Lord William was born in gilded bower,
The heir of Wilton's lofty tower;
Yet better loves Lord William now

To roam beneath wild Rookhope's brow;
And William has lived where ladies fair
With gawds and jewels deck their hair,
Yet better loves the dew-drops still
That pearl the locks of Metelill.

'The pious palmer loves, iwis,
Saint Cuthbert's hallowed beads to kiss;
But I, though simple girl I be,
Might have such homage paid to me;
For did Lord William see me suit
This necklace of the bramble's fruit,
He fain — but must not have his will —
Would kiss the beads of Metelill.

'My nurse has told me many a tale,
How vows of love are weak and frail;
My mother says that courtly youth
By rustic maid means seldom sooth.
What should they mean? it cannot be
That such a warning 's meant for me,
For nought — O, nought of fraud or ill
Can William mean to Metelill!'

VII

Sudden she stops — and starts to feel
A weighty hand, a glove of steel,

Upon her shrinking shoulders laid;
Fearful she turned, and saw dismayed
A knight in plate and mail arrayed,
His crest and bearing worn and frayed,
His surcoat soiled and riven,
Formed like that giant race of yore
Whose long-continued crimes outwore
The sufferance of Heaven.
Stern accents made his pleasure known,
Though then he used his gentlest tone:
'Maiden,' he said, 'sing forth thy glee.
Start not — sing on — it pleases me.'

VIII

Secured within his powerful hold,
To bend her knee, her hands to fold,
Was all the maiden might;
And 'O, forgive,' she faintly said,
'The terrors of a simple maid,
If thou art mortal wight!
But if — of such strange tales are told —
Unearthly warrior of the wold,
Thou comest to chide mine accents bold,
My mother, Jutta, knows the spell
At noon and midnight pleasing well
The disembodied ear;
O, let her powerful charms atone

For aught my rashness may have done,
And cease thy grasp of fear.'
Then laughed the knight — his laughter's sound
Half in the hollow helmet drowned;
His barred visor then he raised,
And steady on the maiden gazed.
He smoothed his brows, as best he might,
To the dread calm of autumn night,
When sinks the tempest roar,
Yet still the cautious fishers eye
The clouds and fear the gloomy sky,
And haul their barks on shore.

IX

'Damsel,' he said, 'be wise, and learn
Matters of weight and deep concern:
From distant realms I come,
And wanderer long at length have planned
In this my native Northern land
To seek myself a home.
Nor that alone — a mate I seek;
She must be gentle, soft, and meek, —
No lordly dame for me;
Myself am something rough of mood
And feel the fire of royal blood,
And therefore do not hold it good
To match in my degree.

Then, since coy maidens say my face
Is harsh, my form devoid of grace,
For a fair lineage to provide
'T is meet that my selected bride
  In lineaments be fair;
I love thine well — till now I ne'er
Looked patient on a face of fear,
But now that tremulous sob and tear
  Become thy beauty rare.'
One kiss — nay, damsel, coy it not! —
And now go seek thy parents' cot,
And say a bridegroom soon I come
To woo my love and bear her home.'

X

Home sprung the maid without a pause,
As leveret 'scaped from greyhound's jaws;
But still she locked, howe'er distressed,
The secret in her boding breast;
Dreading her sire, who oft forbade
Her steps should stray to distant glade.
Night came — to her accustomed nook
Her distaff aged Jutta took,
And by the lamp's imperfect glow
Rough Wulfstane trimmed his shafts and bow.
Sudden and clamorous from the ground
Upstarted slumbering brach and hound;

Loud knocking next the lodge alarms
And Wulfstane snatches at his arms,
When open flew the yielding door
And that grim warrior pressed the floor.

XI

'All peace be here — What! none replies?
Dismiss your fears and your surprise.
'T is I — that maid hath told my tale, —
Or, trembler, did thy courage fail?
It recks not — it is I demand
Fair Metelill in marriage band;
Harold the Dauntless I, whose name
Is brave men's boast and caitiff's shame.'
The parents sought each other's eyes
With awe, resentment, and surprise:
Wulfstane, to quarrel prompt, began
The stranger's size and thews to scan;
But as he scanned his courage sunk,
And from unequal strife he shrunk,
Then forth to blight and blemish flies
The harmful curse from Jutta's eyes;
Yet, fatal howsoe'er, the spell
On Harold innocently fell!
And disappointment and amaze
Were in the witch's wildered gaze.

XII

But soon the wit of woman woke,
And to the warrior mild she spoke:
'Her child was all too young.' — 'A toy,
The refuge of a maiden coy.'
Again, 'A powerful baron's heir
Claims in her heart an interest fair.'
'A trifle — whisper in his ear
That Harold is a suitor here!'
Baffled at length she sought delay:
'Would not the knight till morning stay?
Late was the hour — he there might rest
Till morn, their lodge's honoured guest.'
Such were her words — her craft might cast
Her honoured guest should sleep his last:
'No, not to-night — but soon,' he swore,
'He would return, nor leave them more.'
The threshold then his huge stride crost,
And soon he was in darkness lost.

XIII

Appalled awhile the parents stood,
Then changed their fear to angry mood,
And foremost fell their words of ill
On unresisting Metelill:
Was she not cautioned and forbid,
Forewarned, implored, accused, and chid,

And must she still to greenwood roam
To marshal such misfortune home?
'Hence, minion — to thy chamber hence —
There prudence learn and penitence.'
She went — her lonely couch to steep
In tears which absent lovers weep;
Or if she gained a troubled sleep,
Fierce Harold's suit was still the theme
And terror of her feverish dream.

XIV

Scarce was she gone, her dame and sire
Upon each other bent their ire;
'A woodsman thou and hast a spear,
And couldst thou such an insult bear?'
Sullen he said, 'A man contends
With men, a witch with sprites and fiends;
Not to mere mortal wight belong
Yon gloomy brow and frame so strong.
But thou — is this thy promise fair,
That your Lord William, wealthy heir
To Ulrick, Baron of Witton-le-Wear,
Should Metelill to altar bear?
Do all the spells thou boast'st as thine
Serve but to slay some peasant's kine,
His grain in autumn's storms to steep,
Or thorough fog and fen to sweep

And hag-ride some poor rustic's sleep?
Is such mean mischief worth the fame
Of sorceress and witch's name?
Fame, which with all men's wish conspires,
With thy deserts and my desires,
To damn thy corpse to penal fires?
Out on thee, witch! aroint! aroint!
What now shall put thy schemes in joint?
What save this trusty arrow's point,
From the dark dingle when it flies
And he who meets it gasps and dies?'

XV

Stern she replied, 'I will not wage
War with thy folly or thy rage;
But ere the morrow's sun be low,
Wulfstane of Rookhope, thou shalt know
If I can venge me on a foe.
Believe the while that whatsoe'er
I spoke in ire of bow and spear,
It is not Harold's destiny
The death of pilfered deer to die.
But he, and thou, and yon pale moon —
That shall be yet more pallid soon,
Before she sink behind the dell —
Thou, she, and Harold too, shall tell
What Jutta knows of charm or spell.'

Thus muttering, to the door she bent
Her wayward steps and forth she went,
And left alone the moody sire
To cherish or to slake his ire.

XVI

Far faster than belonged to age
Has Jutta made her pilgrimage.
A priest has met her as she passed,
And crossed himself and stood aghast:
She traced a hamlet — not a cur
His throat would ope, his foot would stir;
By crouch, by trembling, and by groan,
They made her hated presence known!
But when she trode the sable fell,
Were wilder sounds her way to tell, —
For far was heard the fox's yell,
The black-cock waked and faintly crew,
Screamed o'er the moss the scared curlew;
Where o'er the cataract the oak
Lay slant, was heard the raven's croak;
The mountain-cat which sought his prey
Glared, screamed, and started from her way.
Such music cheered her journey lone
To the deep dell and rocking stone:
There with unhallowed hymn of praise
She called a god of heathen days.

XVII

INVOCATION

'From thy Pomeranian throne,
Hewn in rock of living stone,
Where, to thy godhead faithful yet,
Bend Esthonian, Finn, and Lett,
And their swords in vengeance whet,
That shall make thine altars wet,
Wet and red for ages more
With the Christian's hated gore, —
Hear me, Sovereign of the Rock!
Hear me, mighty Zernebock!

'Mightiest of the mighty known,
Here thy wonders have been shown;
Hundred tribes in various tongue
Oft have here thy praises sung;
Down that stone with Runic seamed
Hundred victims' blood hath streamed!
Now one woman comes alone
And but wets it with her own,
The last, the feeblest of thy flock, —
Hear — and be present, Zernebock!

'Hark! he comes! the night-blast cold
Wilder sweeps along the wold;

The cloudless moon grows dark and dim,
And bristling hair and quaking limb
Proclaim the Master Demon nigh, —
Those who view his form shall die!
Lo! I stoop and veil my head;
Thou who ridest the tempest dread,
Shaking hill and rending oak —
Spare me! spare me, Zernebock!

'He comes not yet! Shall cold delay
Thy votaress at her need repay?
Thou — shall I call thee god or fiend? —
Let others on thy mood attend
With prayer and ritual — Jutta's arms
Are necromantic words and charms;
Mine is the spell that uttered once
Shall wake thy Master from his trance,
Shake his red mansion-house of pain
And burst his seven-times-twisted chain! —
So! com'st thou ere the spell is spoke?
I own thy presence, Zernebock.'

XVIII

'Daughter of dust,' the Deep Voice said —
Shook while it spoke the vale for dread,
Rocked on the base that massive stone,
The Evil Deity to own, —

'Daughter of dust! not mine the power
Thou seek'st on Harold's fatal hour.
'Twixt heaven and hell there is a strife
Waged for his soul and for his life,
And fain would we the combat win
And snatch him in his hour of sin.
There is a star now rising red
That threats him with an influence dread:
Woman, thine arts of malice whet,
To use the space before it set.
Involve him with the church in strife,
Push on adventurous chance his life;
Ourself will in the hour of need,
As best we may, thy counsels speed.'
So ceased the Voice; for seven leagues round
Each hamlet started at the sound,
But slept again as slowly died
Its thunders on the hill's brown side.

XIX

'And is this all,' said Jutta stern,
'That thou canst teach and I can learn?
Hence! to the land of fog and waste,
There fittest is thine influence placed,
Thou powerless, sluggish Deity!
But ne'er shall Briton bend the knee
Again before so poor a god.'

She struck the altar with her rod;
Slight was the touch as when at need
A damsel stirs her tardy steed;
But to the blow the stone gave place,
And, starting from its balanced base,
Rolled thundering down the moonlight dell, —
Re-echoed moorland, rock, and fell;
Into the moonlight tarn it dashed,
Their shores the sounding surges lashed,
And there was ripple, rage, and foam;
But on that lake, so dark and lone,
Placid and pale the moonbeam shone
As Jutta hied her home.

CANTO THIRD

I

GREY towers of Durham! there was once a time
I viewed your battlements with such vague hope
As brightens life in its first dawning prime;
Not that e'en then came within fancy's scope
A vision vain of mitre, throne, or cope;
Yet, gazing on the venerable hall,
Her flattering dreams would in perspective ope
Some reverend room, some prebendary's stall, —
And thus Hope me deceived as she deceiveth all.

Well yet I love thy mixed and massive piles,
Half church of God, half castle 'gainst the Scot,
And long to roam these venerable aisles,
With records stored of deeds long since forgot;
There might I share my Surtees' happier lot,
Who leaves at will his patrimonial field
To ransack every crypt and hallowed spot,
And from oblivion rend the spoils they yield,
Restoring priestly chant and clang of knightly shield.

Vain is the wish — since other cares demand
Each vacant hour, and in another clime;

But still that northern harp invites my hand
Which tells the wonder of thine earlier time;
And fain its numbers would I now command
To paint the beauties of that dawning fair
When Harold, gazing from its lofty stand
Upon the western heights of Beaurepaire,
Saw Saxon Eadmer's towers begirt by winding Wear.

II

Fair on the half-seen streams the sunbeams danced,
Betraying it beneath the woodland bank,
And fair between the Gothic turrets glanced
Broad lights, and shadows fell on front and flank,
Where tower and buttress rose in martial rank,
And girdled in the massive donjon keep,
And from their circuit pealed o'er bush and bank
The matin bell with summons long and deep,
And echo answered still with long-resounding sweep.

III

The morning mists rose from the ground,
Each merry bird awakened round
As if in revelry;
Afar the bugle's clanging sound
Calls to the chase the lagging hound;
The gale breathed soft and free,

And seemed to linger on its way
To catch fresh odours from the spray,
And waved it in its wanton play
So light and gamesomely.
The scenes which morning beams reveal,
Its sounds to hear, its gales to feel
In all their fragrance round him steal,
It melted Harold's heart of steel,
And, hardly wotting why,
He doffed his helmet's gloomy pride
And hung it on a tree beside,
Laid mace and falchion by,
And on the greensward sate him down
And from his dark habitual frown
Relaxed his rugged brow —
Whoever hath the doubtful task
From that stern Dane a boon to ask
Were wise to ask it now.

IV

His place beside young Gunnar took
And marked his master's softening look,
And in his eye's dark mirror spied
The gloom of stormy thoughts subside,
And cautious watched the fittest tide
To speak a warning word.

So when the torrent's billows shrink,
The timid pilgrim on the brink
Waits long to see them wave and sink
  Ere he dare brave the ford,
And often after doubtful pause
His step advances or withdraws;
Fearful to move the slumbering ire
Of his stern lord, thus stood the squire
  Till Harold raised his eye,
That glanced as when athwart the shroud
Of the dispersing tempest-cloud
  The bursting sunbeams fly.

V

'Arouse thee, son of Ermengarde,
Offspring of prophetess and bard!
Take harp and greet this lovely prime
With some high strain of Runic rhyme,
Strong, deep, and powerful! Peal it round
Like that loud bell's sonorous sound,
Yet wild by fits, as when the lay
Of bird and bugle hail the day.
Such was my grandsire Eric's sport
When dawn gleamed on his martial court.
Heymar the Scald with harp's high sound
Summoned the chiefs who slept around;
Couched on the spoils of wolf and bear,

They roused like lions from their lair,
Then rushed in emulation forth
To enhance the glories of the north.
Proud Eric, mightiest of thy race,
Where is thy shadowy resting-place?
In wild Valhalla hast thou quaffed
From foeman's skull metheglin draught,
Or wanderest where thy cairn was piled
To frown o'er oceans wide and wild?
Or have the milder Christians given
Thy refuge in their peaceful heaven?
Where'er thou art, to thee are known
Our toils endured, our trophies won,
Our wars, our wanderings, and our woes.'
He ceased, and Gunnar's song arose.

VI

SONG

'Hawk and osprey screamed for joy
O'er the beetling cliffs of Hoy,
Crimson foam the beach o'erspread,
The heath was dyed with darker red,
When o'er Eric, Inguar's son,
Dane and Northman piled the stone,
Singing wild the war-song stern,
"Rest thee, Dweller of the Cairn!"

'Where eddying currents foam and boil
By Bersa's burgh and Græmsay's isle,
The seaman sees a martial form
Half-mingled with the mist and storm.
In anxious awe he bears away
To moor his bark in Stromna's bay,
And murmurs from the bounding stern,
"Rest thee, Dweller of the Cairn!"

'What cares disturb the mighty dead?
Each honoured rite was duly paid;
No daring hand thy helm unlaced,
Thy sword, thy shield, were near thee placed;
Thy flinty couch no tear profaned:
Without, with hostile blood 't was stained;
Within, 't was lined with moss and fern, —
Then rest thee, Dweller of the Cairn!

'He may not rest: from realms afar
Comes voice of battle and of war,
Of conquest wrought with bloody hand
On Carmel's cliffs and Jordan's strand,
When Odin's warlike son could daunt
The turbaned race of Termagaunt.'

VII

'Peace,' said the knight, 'the noble Scald
Our warlike fathers' deeds recalled,

But never strove to soothe the son
With tales of what himself had done.
At Odin's board the bard sits high
Whose harp ne'er stooped to flattery,
But highest he whose daring lay
Hath dared unwelcome truths to say.'
With doubtful smile young Gunnar eyed
His master's looks and nought replied —
But well that smile his master led
To construe what he left unsaid.
'Is it to me, thou timid youth,
Thou fear'st to speak unwelcome truth!
My soul no more thy censure grieves
Than frosts rob laurels of their leaves.
Say on — and yet — beware the rude
And wild distemper of my blood;
Loath were I that mine ire should wrong
The youth that bore my shield so long,
And who, in service constant still,
Though weak in frame, art strong in will.'
'O!' quoth the page, 'even there depends
My counsel — there my warning tends —
Oft seems as of my master's breast
Some demon were the sudden guest;
Then at the first misconstrued word
His hand is on the mace and sword,
From her firm seat his wisdom driven,

His life to countless dangers given.
O, would that Cunnar could suffice
To be the fiend's last sacrifice,
So that, when glutted with my gore,
He fled and tempted thee no more!'

VIII

Then waved his hand and shook his head
The impatient Dane while thus he said:
'Profane not, youth — it is not thine
To judge the spirit of our line —
The bold Berserkar's rage divine,
Through whose inspiring deeds are wrought
Past human strength and human thought.
When full upon his gloomy soul
The champion feels the influence roll,
He swims the lake, he leaps the wall —
Heeds not the depth, nor plumbs the fall —
Unshielded, mail-less, on he goes
Singly against a host of foes;
Their spears he holds like withered reeds,
Their mail like maiden's silken weeds;
One 'gainst a hundred will he strive,
Take countless wounds and yet survive.
Then rush the eagles to his cry
Of slaughter and of victory, —
And blood he quaffs like Odin's bowl,

Deep drinks his sword, — deep drinks his soul;
And all that meet him in his ire
He gives to ruin, rout, and fire;
Then, like gorged lion, seeks some den
And couches till he's man agen.
Thou know'st the signs of look and limb
When 'gins that rage to overbrim —
Thou know'st when I am moved, and why;
And when thou see'st me roll mine eye,
Set my teeth thus, and stamp my foot,
Regard thy safety and be mute;
But else speak boldly out whate'er
Is fitting that a knight should hear.
I love thee, youth. Thy lay has power
Upon my dark and sullen hour; —
So Christian monks are wont to say
Demons of old were charmed away;
Then fear not I will rashly deem
Ill of thy speech, whate'er the theme.'

IX

As down some strait in doubt and dread
The watchful pilot drops the lead,
And, cautious in the midst to steer,
The shoaling channel sounds with fear;
So, lest on dangerous ground he swerved,
The page his master's brow observed,

Pausing at intervals to fling
His hand on the melodious string,
And to his moody breast apply
The soothing charm of harmony,
While hinted half, and half exprest,
This warning song conveyed the rest.

SONG

'Ill fares the bark with tackle riven,
And ill when on the breakers driven, —
Ill when the storm-sprite shrieks in air,
And the scared mermaid tears her hair;
But worse when on her helm the hand
Of some false traitor holds command.

'Ill fares the fainting palmer, placed
'Mid Hebron's rocks or Rana's waste, —
Ill when the scorching sun is high,
And the expected font is dry, —
Worse when his guide o'er sand and heath,
The barbarous Copt, has planned his death.

'Ill fares the knight with buckler cleft,
And ill when of his helm bereft, —
Ill when his steed to earth is flung,
Or from his grasp his falchion wrung;
But worse, of instant ruin token,
When he lists rede by woman spoken.'

X

'How now, fond boy? — Canst thou think ill,'
Said Harold, 'of fair Metelill?'

'She may be fair,' the page replied
As through the strings he ranged, —
'She may be fair; but yet,' he cried,
And then the strain he changed, —

SONG

'She may be fair,' he sang, 'but yet
Far fairer have I seen
Than she, for all her locks of jet
And eyes so dark and sheen.
Were I a Danish knight in arms,
As one day I may be,
My heart should own no foreign charms —
A Danish maid for me!

'I love my father's northern land,
Where the dark pine-trees grow,
And the bold Baltic's echoing strand
Looks o'er each grassy oe.
I love to mark the lingering sun,
From Denmark loath to go,

And leaving on the billows bright,
To cheer the short-lived summer night,
A path of ruddy glow.

'But most the northern maid I love,
With breast like Denmark's snow
And form as fair as Denmark's pine,
Who loves with purple heath to twine
Her locks of sunny glow;
And sweetly blend that shade of gold
With the cheek's rosy hue,
And Faith might for her mirror hold
That eye of matchless blue.

''T is hers the manly sports to love
That southern maidens fear,
To bend the bow by stream and grove,
And lift the hunter's spear.
She can her chosen champion's flight
With eye undazzled see,
Clasp him victorious from the strife,
Or on his corpse yield up her life, —
A Danish maid for me!'

XI

Then smiled the Dane: 'Thou canst so well,
The virtues of our maidens tell,

Half could I wish my choice had been
Blue eyes, and hair of golden sheen,
And lofty soul; — yet what of ill
Hast thou to charge on Metelill?'
'Nothing on her,' young Gunnar said,
'But her base sire's ignoble trade.
Her mother too — the general fame
Hath given to Jutta evil name,
And in her grey eye is a flame
Art cannot hide nor fear can tame.
That sordid woodman's peasant cot
Twice have thine honoured footsteps sought,
And twice returned with such ill rede
As sent thee on some desperate deed.'

XII

'Thou errest; Jutta wisely said,
He that comes suitor to a maid,
Ere linked in marriage, should provide
Lands and a dwelling for his bride —
My father's by the Tyne and Wear
I have reclaimed.' — 'O, all too dear
And all too dangerous the prize,
E'en were it won,' young Gunnar cries; —
'And then this Jutta's fresh device,
That thou shouldst seek, a heathen Dane,
From Durham's priests a boon to gain

When thou hast left their vassals slain
In their own halls!' — Flashed Harold's eye,
Thundered his voice — 'False page, you lie!'
The castle, hall and tower, is mine,
Built by old Witikind on Tyne.
The wild-cat will defend his den,
Fights for her nest the timid wren;
And think'st thou I'll forego my right
For dread of monk or monkish knight?
Up and away, that deepening bell
Doth of the bishop's conclave tell.
Thither will I in manner due,
As Jutta bade, my claim to sue;
And if to right me they are loath,
Then woe to church and chapter both!'
Now shift the scene and let the curtain fall,
And our next entry be Saint Cuthbert's hall.

CANTO FOURTH

I

FULL many a bard hath sung the solemn gloom
Of the long Gothic aisle and stone-ribbed roof,
O'er-canopying shrine and gorgeous tomb,
Carved screen, and altar glimmering far aloof
And blending with the shade — a matchless proof
Of high devotion, which hath now waxed cold;
Yet legends say that Luxury's brute hoof
Intruded oft within such sacred fold,
Like step of Bel's false priest tracked in his fane of old.

Well pleased am I, howe'er, that when the rout
Of our neighbours whilome deigned to come,
Uncalled and eke unwelcome, to sweep out
And cleanse our chancel from the rags of Rome,
They spoke not on our ancient fane the doom
To which their bigot zeal gave o'er their own,
But spared the martyred saint and storied tomb,
Though papal miracles had graced the stone,
And though the aisles still loved the organ's swelling tone.

And deem not, though 't is now my part to paint
A prelate swayed by love of power and gold,

That all who wore the mitre of our Saint
Like to ambitious Aldingar I hold;
Since both in modern times and days of old
It sate on those whose virtues might atone
Their predecessors' frailties trebly told:
Matthew and Morton we as such may own —
And such — if fame speak truth — the honoured
Barrington.

II

But now to earlier and to ruder times,
As subject meet, I tune my rugged rhymes,
Telling how fairly the chapter was met,
And rood and books in seemly order set;
Huge brass-clasped volumes which the hand
Of studious priest but rarely scanned,
Now on fair carved desk displayed,
'T was theirs the solemn scene to aid.
O'erhead with many a scutcheon graced
And quaint devices interlaced,
A labyrinth of crossing rows,
The roof in lessening arches shows;
Beneath its shade placed proud and high
With footstool and with canopy,
Sate Aldingar — and prelate ne'er
More haughty graced Saint Cuthbert's chair;
Canons and deacons were placed below,
In due degree and lengthened row.

Unmoved and silent each sat there,
Like image in his oaken chair;
Nor head nor hand nor foot they stirred,
Nor lock of hair nor tress of beard;
And of their eyes severe alone
The twinkle showed they were not stone.

III

The prelate was to speech addressed,
Each head sunk reverent on each breast;
But ere his voice was heard — without
Arose a wild tumultuous shout,
Offspring of wonder mixed with fear,
Such as in crowded streets we hear
Hailing the flames that, bursting out,
Attract yet scare the rabble rout.
Ere it had ceased a giant hand
Shook oaken door and iron band
Till oak and iron both gave way,
Clashed the long bolts, the hinges bray,
And, ere upon angel or saint they can call,
Stands Harold the Dauntless in midst of the hall.

IV

'Now save ye, my masters, both rocket and rood,
From bishop with mitre to deacon with hood!
For here stands Count Harold, old Witikind's son,

Come to sue for the lands which his ancestors won.'
The prelate looked round him with sore troubled eye,
Unwilling to grant, yet afraid to deny;
While each canon and deacon who heard the Dane speak,
To be safely at home would have fasted a week: —
Then Aldingar roused him and answered again,
'Thou suest for a boon which thou canst not obtain;
The Church hath no fiefs for an unchristened Dane.
Thy father was wise, and his treasure hath given
That the priests of a chantry might hymn him to heaven;
And the fiefs which whilome he possessed as his due
Have lapsed to the Church, and been granted anew
To Anthony Conyers and Alberic Vere,
For the service Saint Cuthbert's blest banner to bear
Where the bands of the North come to foray the Wear;
Then disturb not our conclave with wrangling or blame,
But in peace and in patience pass hence as ye came.'

V

Loud laughed the stern Pagan, 'They're free from the care
Of fief and of service, both Conyers and Vere, —
Six feet of your chancel is all they will need,
A buckler of stone and a corselet of lead.
Ho, Gunnar! — the tokens!' — and, severed anew,
A head and a hand on the altar he threw.

Then shuddered with terror both canon and monk,
They knew the glazed eye and the countenance shrunk,
And of Anthony Conyers the half-grizzled hair,
And the scar on the hand of Sir Alberic Vere.
There was not a churchman or priest that was there
But grew pale at the sight and betook him to prayer.

VI

Count Harold laughed at their looks of fear:
'Was this the hand should your banner bear?
Was that the head should wear the casque
In battle at the Church's task?
Was it to such you gave the place
Of Harold with the heavy mace?
Find me between the Wear and Tyne
A knight will wield this club of mine, —
Give him my fiefs, and I will say
There's wit beneath the cowl of grey.'
He raised it, rough with many a stain
Caught from crushed skull and spouting brain;
He wheeled it that it shrilly sung
And the aisles echoed as it swung,
Then dashed it down with sheer descent
And split King Osric's monument.
'How like ye this music? How trow ye the hand
That can wield such a mace may be reft of its land?
No answer? — I spare ye a space to agree,

And Saint Cuthbert inspire you, a saint if he be.
Ten strides through your chancel, ten strokes on your bell,
And again I am with you — grave fathers, farewell.'

VII

He turned from their presence, he clashed the oak door,
And the clang of his stride died away on the floor;
And his head from his bosom the prelate uprears
With a ghost-seer's look when the ghost disappears:
'Ye priests of Saint Cuthbert, now give me your rede,
For never of counsel had bishop more need!
Were the arch-fiend incarnate in flesh and in bone,
The language, the look, and the laugh were his own.
In the bounds of Saint Cuthbert there is not a knight
Dare confront in our quarrel yon goblin in fight;
Then rede me aright to his claim to reply,
'T is unlawful to grant, and 't is death to deny.'

VIII

On venison and malmsie that morning had fed
The Cellarer Vinsauf — 't was thus that he said:
'Delay till to-morrow the Chapter's reply;
Let the feast be spread fair and the wine be poured high:
If he's mortal he drinks, — if he drinks, he is ours —

His bracelets of iron, — his bed in our towers.'
This man had a laughing eye,
Trust not, friends, when such you spy;
A beaker's depth he well could drain,
Revel, sport, and jest amain —
The haunch of the deer and the grape's bright dye
Never bard loved them better than I;
But sooner than Vinsauf filled me my wine,
Passed me his jest, and laughed at mine,
Though the buck were of Bearpark, of Bordeaux the vine,
With the dullest hermit I'd rather dine
On an oaten cake and a draught of the Tyne.

IX

Walwayn the leech spoke next — he knew
Each plant that loves the sun and dew,
But special those whose juice can gain
Dominion o'er the blood and brain;
The peasant who saw him by pale moonbeam
Gathering such herbs by bank and stream
Deemed his thin form and soundless tread
Were those of wanderer from the dead.
'Vinsauf, thy wine,' he said, 'hath power,
Our gyves are heavy, strong our tower;
Yet three drops from this flask of mine,
More strong than dungeons, gyves, or wine,

Shall give him prison under ground
More dark, more narrow, more profound.
Short rede, good rede, let Harold have —
A dog's death and a heathen's grave.'
I have lain on a sick man's bed,
Watching for hours for the leech's tread,
As if I deemed that his presence alone
Were of power to bid my pain begone;
I have listed his words of comfort given,
As if to oracles from heaven;
I have counted his steps from my chamber door,
And blessed them when they were heard no more; —
But sooner than Walwayn my sick couch should nigh,
My choice were by leech-craft unaided to die!

X

'Such service done in fervent zeal
The Church may pardon and conceal,'
The doubtful prelate said, 'but ne'er
The counsel ere the act should hear.
Anselm of Jarrow, advise us now,
The stamp of wisdom is on thy brow;
Thy days, thy nights, in cloister pent,
Are still to mystic learning lent; —
Anselm of Jarrow, in thee is my hope,
Thou well mayst give counsel to prelate or pope.'

XI

Answered the prior, — ''T is wisdom's use
Still to delay what we dare not refuse;
Ere granting the boon he comes hither to ask,
Shape for the giant gigantic task;
Let us see how a step so sounding can tread
In paths of darkness, danger, and dread;
He may not, he will not, impugn our decree
That calls but for proof of his chivalry;
And were Guy to return or Sir Bevis the Strong,
Our wilds have adventure might cumber them long —
The Castle of Seven Shields' — 'Kind Anselm, no more!
The step of the Pagan approaches the door.'
The churchmen were hushed. — In his mantle of skin
With his mace on his shoulder Count Harold strode in.
There was foam on his lips, there was fire in his eye,
For, chafed by attendance, his fury was nigh.
'Ho! Bishop,' he said, 'dost thou grant me my claim?
Or must I assert it by falchion and flame?'

XII

'On thy suit, gallant Harold,' the bishop replied,
In accents which trembled, 'we may not decide
Until proof of your strength and your valour we
saw —
'T is not that we doubt them, but such is the law.'

'And would you, Sir Prelate, have Harold make sport
For the cowls and the shavelings that herd in thy court?
Say what shall he do? — From the shrine shall he tear
The lead bier of thy patron and heave it in air,
And through the long chancel make Cuthbert take wing
With the speed of a bullet dismissed from the sling?'
'Nay, spare such probation,' the cellarer said,
'From the mouth of our minstrels thy task shall be read.
While the wine sparkles high in the goblet of gold
And the revel is loudest, thy task shall be told;
And thyself, gallant Harold, shall, hearing it, tell
That the bishop, his cowls, and his shavelings, meant well.'

XIII

Loud revelled the guests and the goblets loud rang,
But louder the minstrel, Hugh Meneville, sang;
And Harold, the hurry and pride of whose soul,
E'en when verging to fury, owned music's control,
Still bent on the harper his broad sable eye,
And often untasted the goblet passed by;
Than wine or than wassail to him was more dear
The minstrel's high tale of enchantment to hear;
And the bishop that day might of Vinsauf complain
That his art had but wasted his wine-casks in vain.

XIV

THE CASTLE OF THE SEVEN SHIELDS

A BALLAD

The Druid Urien had daughters seven,
Their skill could call the moon from heaven;
So fair their forms and so high their fame
That seven proud kings for their suitors came.

King Mador and Rhys came from Powis and Wales,
Unshorn was their hair and unpruned were their nails;
From Strath-Clyde was Ewain, and Ewain was lame,
And the red-bearded Donald from Galloway came.

Lot, King of Lodon, was hunchbacked from youth;
Dunmail of Cumbria had never a tooth;
But Adolf of Bambrough, Northumberland's heir,
Was gay and was gallant, was young and was fair.

There was strife 'mongst the sisters, for each one would have
For husband King Adolf, the gallant and brave;
And envy bred hate, and hate urged them to blows,
When the firm earth was cleft and the Arch-fiend arose!

He swore to the maidens their wish to fulfil —
They swore to the foe they would work by his will.

A spindle and distaff to each hath he given,
'Now hearken my spell,' said the Outcast of heaven.

'Ye shall ply these spindles at midnight hour,
And for every spindle shall rise a tower,
Where the right shall be feeble, the wrong shall have
power,
And there shall ye dwell with your paramour.'

Beneath the pale moonlight they sate on the wold,
And the rhymes which they chanted must never be
told;
And as the black wool from the distaff they sped,
With blood from their bosom they moistened the thread.

As light danced the spindles beneath the cold gleam,
The castle arose like the birth of a dream —
The seven towers ascended like mist from the ground,
Seven portals defend them, seven ditches surround.

Within that dread castle seven monarchs were wed,
But six of the seven ere the morning lay dead;
With their eyes all on fire and their daggers all red,
Seven damsels surround the Northumbrian's bed.

'Six kingly bridegrooms to death we have done,
Six gallant kingdoms King Adolf hath won,

Six lovely brides all his pleasure to do,
Or the bed of the seventh shall be husbandless too.'

Well chanced it that Adolf the night when he wed
Had confessed and had sained him ere boune to his bed;
He sprung from the couch and his broadsword he drew,
And there the seven daughters of Urien he slew.

The gate of the castle he bolted and sealed,
And hung o'er each arch-stone a crown and a shield;
To the cells of Saint Dunstan then wended his way,
And died in his cloister an anchorite grey.

Seven monarchs' wealth in that castle lies stowed,
The foul fiends brood o'er them like raven and toad.
Whoever shall guesten these chambers within,
From curfew till matins, that treasure shall win.

But manhood grows faint as the world waxes old!
There lives not in Britain a champion so bold,
So dauntless of heart and so prudent of brain,
As to dare the adventure that treasure to gain.

The waste ridge of Cheviot shall wave with the rye,
Before the rude Scots shall Northumberland fly,
And the flint cliffs of Bambro' shall melt in the sun,
Before that adventure be perilled and won.

XV

'And is this my probation?' wild Harold he said,
'Within a lone castle to press a lone bed? —
Good even, my lord bishop, — Saint Cuthbert to
borrow,
The Castle of Seven Shields receives me to-morrow.'

CANTO FIFTH

I

Denmark's sage courtier to her princely youth,
Granting his cloud an ousel or a whale,
Spoke, though unwittingly, a partial truth;
For Fantasy embroiders Nature's veil.
The tints of ruddy eve or dawning pale,
Of the swart thunder-cloud or silver haze,
Are but the ground-work of the rich detail
Which Fantasy with pencil wild portrays,
Blending what seems and is in the wrapt muser's gaze.

Nor are the stubborn forms of earth and stone
Less to the Sorceress's empire given;
For not with unsubstantial hues alone,
Caught from the varying surge of vacant heaven,
From bursting sunbeam or from flashing levin,
She limns her pictures: on the earth, as air,
Arise her castles and her car is driven;
And never gazed the eye on scene so fair,
But of its boasted charms gave Fancy half the share.

II

Up a wild pass went Harold, bent to prove,
Hugh Meneville, the adventure of thy lay;

Gunnar pursued his steps in faith and love,
Ever companion of his master's way.
Midward their path, a rock of granite grey
From the adjoining cliff had made descent, —
A barren mass — yet with her drooping spray
Had a young birch-tree crowned its battlement,
Twisting her fibrous roots through cranny, flaw, and rent.

This rock and tree could Gunnar's thought engage
Till Fancy brought the tear-drop to his eye,
And at his master asked the timid page,
'What is the emblem that a bard should spy
In that rude rock and its green canopy?'
And Harold said, 'Like to the helmet brave
Of warrior slain in fight it seems to lie,
And these same drooping boughs do o'er it wave
Not all unlike the plume his lady's favour gave.'

'Ah, no!' replied the page; 'the ill-starred love
Of some poor maid is in the emblem shown,
Whose fates are with some hero's interwove,
And rooted on a heart to love unknown:
And as the gentle dews of heaven alone
Nourish those drooping boughs, and as the scathe
Of the red lightning rends both tree and stone,
So fares it with her unrequited faith, —
Her sole relief is tears — her only refuge death.'

III

'Thou art a fond fantastic boy,'
Harold replied, 'to females coy,
Yet prating still of love;
Even so amid the clash of war
I know thou lov'st to keep afar,
Though destined by thy evil star
With one like me to rove,
Whose business and whose joys are found
Upon the bloody battle-ground.
Yet, foolish trembler as thou art,
Thou hast a nook of my rude heart,
And thou and I will never part; —
Harold would wrap the world in flame
Ere injury on Gunnar came.'

IV

The grateful page made no reply,
But turned to heaven his gentle eye,
And clasped his hands, as one who said,
'My toils — my wanderings are o'erpaid!'
Then in a gayer, lighter strain,
Compelled himself to speech again;
And, as they flowed along,
His words took cadence soft and slow,
And liquid, like dissolving snow,
They melted into song.

V

'What though through fields of carnage wide
I may not follow Harold's stride,
Yet who with faithful Gunnar's pride
Lord Harold's feats can see?
And dearer than the couch of pride
He loves the bed of grey wolf's hide,
When slumbering by Lord Harold's side
In forest, field, or lea.'

VI

'Break off!' said Harold, in a tone
Where hurry and surprise were shown,
With some slight touch of fear,
'Break off, we are not here alone;
A palmer form comes slowly on!
By cowl and staff and mantle known,
My monitor is near.
Now mark him, Gunnar, heedfully;
He pauses by the blighted tree —
Dost see him, youth? — Thou couldst not see
When in the vale of Galilee
I first beheld his form,
Nor when we met that other while
In Cephalonia's rocky isle
Before the fearful storm, —

Dost see him now?' — The page, distraught
With terror, answered, 'I see nought,
And there is nought to see,
Save that the oak's scathed boughs fling down
Upon the path a shadow brown
That, like a pilgrim's dusky gown,
Waves with the waving tree.'

VII

Count Harold gazed upon the oak
As if his eyestrings would have broke,
And then resolvedly said,
'Be what it will yon phantom grey —
Nor heaven nor hell shall ever say
That for their shadows from his way
Count Harold turned dismayed:
I'll speak him, though his accents fill
My heart with that unwonted thrill
Which vulgar minds call fear.
I will subdue it!' Forth he strode,
Paused where the blighted oak-tree showed
Its sable shadow on the road,
And, folding on his bosom broad
His arms, said, 'Speak — I hear.'

VIII

The Deep Voice said, 'O wild of will,
Furious thy purpose to fulfil —

Heart-seared and unrepentant still,
How long, O Harold, shall thy tread
Disturb the slumbers of the dead?
Each step in thy wild way thou makest,
The ashes of the dead thou wakest;
And shout in triumph o'er thy path
The fiends of bloodshed and of wrath.
In this thine hour, yet turn and hear!
For life is brief and judgment near.'

IX

Then ceased the Voice. — The Dane replied
In tones where awe and inborn pride
For mastery strove, 'In vain ye chide
The wolf for ravaging the flock,
Or with its hardness taunt the rock, —
I am as they — my Danish strain
Sends streams of fire through every vein.
Amid thy realms of goule and ghost
Say, is the fame of Eric lost,
Or Witikind's the Waster, known
Where fame or spoil was to be won;
Whose galleys ne'er bore off a shore
They left not black with flame? —
He was my sire, — and, sprung of him,
That rover merciless and grim,
Can I be soft and tame?

Part hence and with my crimes no more upbraid me,
I am that Waster's son, and am but what he made me.'

X

The Phantom groaned; — the mountain shook around,
The fawn and wild-doe started at the sound,
The gorse and fern did wildly round them wave,
As if some sudden storm the impulse gave.
'All thou hast said is truth — yet on the head
Of that bad sire let not the charge be laid
That he, like thee, with unrelenting pace
From grave to cradle ran the evil race: —
Relentless in his avarice and ire,
Churches and towns he gave to sword and fire;
Shed blood like water, wasted every land,
Like the destroying angel's burning brand;
Fulfiled whate'er of ill might be invented,
Yes, — all these things he did — he did, but he REPENTED!
Perchance it is part of his punishment still
That his offspring pursues his example of ill.
But thou, when thy tempest of wrath shall next shake thee,
Gird thy loins for resistance, my son, and awake thee;
If thou yield'st to thy fury, how tempted soever,
The gate of repentance shall ope for thee NEVER!'

XI

'He is gone,' said Lord Harold and gazed as he spoke;
'There is nought on the path but the shade of the oak.
He is gone whose strange presence my feelings oppressed,
Like the night-hag that sits on the slumberer's breast.
My heart beats as thick as a fugitive's tread,
And cold dews drop from my brow and my head. —
Ho! Gunnar, the flasket yon almoner gave;
He said that three drops would recall from the grave.
For the first time Count Harold owns leechcraft has power,
Or, his courage to aid, lacks the juice of a flower!'
The page gave the flasket, which Walwayn had filled
With the juice of wild roots that his heart had distilled —
So baneful their influence on all that had breath,
One drop had been frenzy and two had been death.
Harold took it, but drank not; for jubilee shrill
And music and clamour were heard on the hill,
And down the steep pathway o'er stock and o'er stone
The train of a bridal came blithesomely on;
There was song, there was pipe, there was timbrel and still
The burden was, 'Joy to the fair Metelill!'

XII

Harold might see from his high stance,
Himself unseen, that train advance,
With mirth and melody; —
On horse and foot a mingled throng,
Measuring their steps to bridal song
And bridal minstrelsy;
And ever when the blithesome rout
Lent to the song their choral shout,
Redoubling echoes rolled about,
While echoing cave and cliff sent out
The answering symphony
Of all those mimic notes which dwell
In hollow rock and sounding dell.

XIII

Joy shook his torch above the band,
By many a various passion fanned; —
As elemental sparks can feed
On essence pure and coarsest weed,
Gentle or stormy or refined,
Joy takes the colours of the mind.
Lightsome and pure but unrepressed,
He fired the bridegroom's gallant breast;
More feebly strove with maiden fear,
Yet still joy glimmered through the tear

On the bride's blushing cheek that shows
Like dew-drops on the budding rose;
While Wulfstane's gloomy smile declared
The glee that selfish avarice shared,
And pleased revenge and malice high
Joy's semblance took in Jutta's eye.
On dangerous adventure sped,
The witch deemed Harold with the dead,
For thus that morn her demon said: —
'If, ere the set of sun, be tied
The knot 'twixt bridegroom and his bride,
The Dane shall have no power of ill
O'er William and o'er Metelill.'
And the pleased witch made answer, 'Then
Must Harold have passed from the paths of men!
Evil repose may his spirit have, —
May hemlock and mandrake find root in his grave, —
May his death-sleep be dogged by dreams of dismay,
And his waking be worse at the answering day!'

XIV

Such was their various mood of glee
Blent in one shout of ecstasy.
But still when Joy is brimming highest,
Of sorrow and misfortune nighest,
Of Terror with her ague cheek,
And lurking Danger, sages speak: —

These haunt each path, but chief they lay
Their snares beside the primrose way. —
Thus found that bridal band their path
Beset by Harold in his wrath.
Trembling beneath his maddening mood,
High on a rock the giant stood;
His shout was like the doom of death
Spoke o'er their heads that passed beneath.
His destined victims might not spy
The reddening terrors of his eye,
The frown of rage that writhed his face,
The lip that foamed like boar's in chase;
But all could see — and, seeing, all
Bore back to shun the threatened fall —
The fragment which their giant foe
Rent from the cliff and heaved to throw.

XV

Backward they bore — yet are there two
  For battle who prepare:
No pause of dread Lord William knew
  Ere his good blade was bare;
And Wulfstane bent his fatal yew,
But ere the silken cord he drew,
As hurled from Hecla's thunder flew
  That ruin through the air!

Full on the outlaw's front it came,
And all that late had human name,
And human face, and human frame,
That lived and moved and had free will
To choose the path of good or ill,
  Is to its reckoning gone;
And nought of Wulfstane rests behind
  Save that beneath that stone,
Half-buried in the dinted clay,
A red and shapeless mass there lay
  Of mingled flesh and bone!

XVI

As from the bosom of the sky
  The eagle darts amain,
Three bounds from yonder summit high
  Placed Harold on the plain.
As the scared wild-fowl scream and fly,
  So fled the bridal train;
As 'gainst the eagle's peerless might
The noble falcon dares the fight,
  But dares the fight in vain,
So fought the bridegroom; from his hand
The Dane's rude mace has struck his brand,
Its glittering fragments strew the sand,
  Its lord lies on the plain.
Now, Heaven! take noble William's part,

And melt that yet unmelted heart,
Or, ere his bridal hour depart,
The hapless bridegroom 's slain!

XVII

Count Harold's frenzied rage is high,
There is a death-fire in his eye,
Deep furrows on his brow are trenched,
His teeth are set, his hand is clenched,
The foam upon his lip is white,
His deadly arm is up to smite!
But, as the mace aloft he swung,
To stop the blow young Gunnar sprung,
Around his master's knees he clung,
And cried, 'In mercy spare!
O, think upon the words of fear
Spoke by that visionary Seer,
The crisis he foretold is here, —
Grant mercy, — or despair!'
This word suspended Harold's mood,
Yet still with arm upraised he stood,
And visage like the headsman's rude
That pauses for the sign.
'O mark thee with the blessed rood,'
The page implored: 'Speak word of good,
Resist the fiend or be subdued!'
He signed the cross divine —

Instant his eye hath human light,
Less red, less keen, less fiercely bright;
His brow relaxed the obdurate frown,
The fatal mace sinks gently down,
He turns and strides away;
Yet oft, like revellers who leave
Unfinished feast, looks back to grieve,
As if repenting the reprieve
He granted to his prey.
Yet still of forbearance one sign hath he given,
And fierce Witikind's son made one step towards heaven.

XVIII

But though his dreaded footsteps part,
Death is behind and shakes his dart;
Lord William on the plain is lying,
Beside him Metelill seems dying! —
Bring odours — essences in haste —
And lo! a flasket richly chased, —
But Jutta the elixir proves
Ere pouring it for those she loves —
Then Walwayn's potion was not wasted,
For when three drops the hag had tasted
So dismal was her yell,
Each bird of evil omen woke,
The raven gave his fatal croak,

And shrieked the night-crow from the oak,
The screech-owl from the thicket broke,
  And fluttered down the dell!
So fearful was the sound and stern,
The slumbers of the full-gorged erne
Were startled, and from furze and fern
  Of forest and of fell
The fox and famished wolf replied —
For wolves then prowled the Cheviot side —
From mountain head to mountain head
The unhallowed sounds around were sped;
But when their latest echo fled
The sorceress on the ground lay dead.

XIX

Such was the scene of blood and woes
With which the bridal morn arose
  Of William and of Metelill;
But oft, when dawning 'gins to spread,
The summer morn peeps dim and red
  Above the eastern hill,
Ere, bright and fair, upon his road
The king of splendour walks abroad;
So, when this cloud had passed away,
Bright was the noontide of their day
And all serene its setting ray.

CANTO SIXTH

I

Well do I hope that this my minstrel tale
Will tempt no traveller from southern fields,
Whether in tilbury, barouche, or mail,
To view the Castle of these Seven Proud Shields.
Small confirmation its condition yields
To Meneville's high lay, — no towers are seen
On the wild heath but those that Fancy builds,
And, save a fosse that tracks the moor with green,
Is nought remains to tell of what may there have been.

And yet grave authors, with the no small waste
Of their grave time, have dignified the spot
By theories, to prove the fortress placed
By Roman bands to curb the invading Scot.
Hutchinson, Horseley, Camden, I might quote,
But rather choose the theory less civil
Of boors, who, origin of things forgot,
Refer still to the origin of evil,
And for their master-mason choose that master-fiend the Devil.

II

Therefore, I say, it was on fiend-built towers
That stout Count Harold bent his wondering gaze

When evening dew was on the heather flowers,
And the last sunbeams made the mountain blaze
And tinged the battlements of other days
With the bright level light ere sinking down.
Illumined thus, the dauntless Dane surveys
The Seven Proud Shields that o'er the portal frown,
And on their blazons traced high marks of old renown.

A wolf North Wales had on his armour-coat,
And Rhys of Powis-land a couchant stag;
Strath-Clwyd's strange emblem was a stranded boat,
Donald of Galloway's a trotting nag;
A corn-sheaf gilt was fertile Lodon's brag;
A dudgeon-dagger was by Dunmail worn;
Northumbrian Adolf gave a sea-beat crag
Surmounted by a cross — such signs were borne
Upon these antique shields, all wasted now and worn.

III

These scanned, Count Harold sought the castle-door,
Whose ponderous bolts were rusted to decay;
Yet till that hour adventurous knight forbore
The unobstructed passage to essay.
More strong than armèd warders in array,
And obstacle more sure than bolt or bar,
Sate in the portal Terror and Dismay,
While Superstition, who forbade to war

With foes of other mould than mortal clay,
Cast spells across the gate and barred the onward way.

Vain now those spells; for soon with heavy clank
The feebly-fastened gate was inward pushed,
And, as it oped, through that emblazoned rank
Of antique shields the wind of evening rushed
With sound most like a groan and then was hushed.
Is none who on such spot such sounds could hear
But to his heart the blood had faster rushed;
Yet to bold Harold's breast that throb was dear —
It spoke of danger nigh, but had no touch of fear.

IV

Yet Harold and his page no signs have traced
Within the castle that of danger showed;
For still the halls and courts were wild and waste,
As through their precincts the adventurers trode.
The seven huge towers rose stately, tall, and broad,
Each tower presenting to their scrutiny
A hall in which a king might make abode,
And fast beside, garnished both proud and high,
Was placed a bower for rest in which a king might lie.

As if a bridal there of late had been,
Decked stood the table in each gorgeous hall;
And yet it was two hundred years, I ween,

Since date of that unhallowed festival.
Flagons and ewers and standing cups were all
Of tarnished gold or silver nothing clear,
With throne begilt and canopy of pall,
And tapestry clothed the walls with fragments sear—
Frail as the spider's mesh did that rich woof appear.

V

In every bower, as round a hearse, was hung
A dusky crimson curtain o'er the bed,
And on each couch in ghastly wise were flung
The wasted relics of a monarch dead;
Barbaric ornaments around were spread,
Vests twined with gold and chains of precious stone,
And golden circlets, meet for monarch's head;
While grinned, as if in scorn amongst them thrown,
The wearer's fleshless skull, alike with dust bestrewn.

For these were they who, drunken with delight,
On pleasure's opiate pillow laid their head,
For whom the bride's shy footstep, slow and light,
Was changed ere morning to the murderer's tread.
For human bliss and woe in the frail thread
Of human life are all so closely twined
That till the shears of Fate the texture shred
The close succession cannot be disjoined,
Nor dare we from one hour judge that which comes behind.

VI

But where the work of vengeance had been done,
In that seventh chamber, was a sterner sight;
There of the witch-brides lay each skeleton,
Still in the posture as to death when dight.
For this lay prone, by one blow slain outright;
And that, as one who struggled long in dying;
One bony hand held knife, as if to smite;
One bent on fleshless knees, as mercy crying;
One lay across the door, as killed in act of flying.

The stern Dane smiled this charnel-house to see, —
For his chafed thought returned to Metelill; —
And 'Well,' he said, 'hath woman's perfidy,
Empty as air, as water volatile,
Been here avenged. — The origin of ill
Through woman rose, the Christian doctrine saith;
Nor deem I, Gunnar, that thy minstrel skill
Can show example where a woman's breath
Hath made a true-love vow, and tempted kept her faith.'

VII

The minstrel-boy half smiled, half sighed,
And his half-filling eyes he dried,
And said, 'The theme I should but wrong,
Unless it were my dying song —

Our Scalds have said, in dying hour
The Northern harp has treble power —
Else could I tell of woman's faith,
Defying danger, scorn, and death.
Firm was that faith — as diamond stone
Pure and unflawed — her love unknown
And unrequited; — firm and pure,
Her stainless faith could all endure;
From clime to clime, from place to place,
Through want and danger and disgrace,
A wanderer's wayward steps could trace.
All this she did, and guerdon none
Required save that her burial-stone
Should make at length the secret known,
"Thus hath a faithful woman done."
Not in each breast such truth is laid,
But Eivir was a Danish maid.'

VIII

'Thou art a wild enthusiast,' said
Count Harold, 'for thy Danish maid;
And yet, young Gunnar, I will own
Hers were a faith to rest upon.
But Eivir sleeps beneath her stone
And all resembling her are gone.
What maid e'er showed such constancy
In plighted faith, like thine to me?

But couch thee, boy; the darksome shade
Falls thickly round, nor be dismayed
  Because the dead are by.
They were as we; our little day
O'erspent, and we shall be as they.
Yet near me, Gunnar, be thou laid,
Thy couch upon my mantle made,
That thou mayst think, should fear invade,
  Thy master slumbers nigh.'
Thus couched they in that dread abode,
Until the beams of dawning glowed.

IX

An altered man Lord Harold rose,
When he beheld that dawn unclose —
  There's trouble in his eyes,
And traces on his brow and cheek
Of mingled awe and wonder speak:
  'My page,' he said, 'arise; —
Leave we this place, my page.' — No more
He uttered till the castle door
They crossed — but there he paused and said,
'My wildness hath awaked the dead —
  Disturbed the sacred tomb!
Methought this night I stood on high
Where Hecla roars in middle sky,
And in her caverned gulfs could spy

The central place of doom;
And there before my mortal eye
Souls of the dead came flitting by,
Whom fiends with many a fiendish cry
Bore to that evil den!
My eyes grew dizzy and my brain
Was wildered, as the elvish train
With shriek and howl dragged on amain,
Those who had late been men.

X

'With haggard eyes and streaming hair,
Jutta the Sorceress was there,
And there passed Wulfstane lately slain,
All crushed and foul with bloody stain. —
More had I seen, but that uprose
A whirlwind wild and swept the snows;
And with such sound as when at need
A champion spurs his horse to speed,
Three armèd knights rush on who lead
Caparisoned a sable steed.
Sable their harness, and there came
Through their closed visors sparks of flame.
The first proclaimed, in sounds of fear,
"Harold the Dauntless, welcome here!"
The next cried, "Jubilee! we've won
Count Witikind the Waster's son!"

And the third rider sternly spoke,
"Mount, in the name of Zernebock! —
From us, O Harold, were thy powers, —
Thy strength, thy dauntlessness are ours;
Nor think, a vassal thou of hell,
With hell can strive." The fiend spoke true!
My inmost soul the summons knew,
As captives know the knell
That says the headsman's sword is bare
And with an accent of despair
Commands them quit their cell.
I felt resistance was in vain,
My foot had that fell stirrup ta'en,
My hand was on the fatal mane,
When to my rescue sped
That palmer's visionary form,
And — like the passing of a storm —
The demons yelled and fled!

XI

'His sable cowl flung back revealed
The features it before concealed;
And, Gunnar, I could find
In him whose counsels strove to stay
So oft my course on wilful way
My father Witikind!
Doomed for his sins and doomed for mine

A wanderer upon earth to pine
Until his son shall turn to grace
And smooth for him a resting-place. —
Gunnar, he must not haunt in vain
This world of wretchedness and pain:
I'll tame my wilful heart to live
In peace — to pity and forgive —
And thou, for so the Vision said,
Must in thy Lord's repentance aid.
Thy mother was a prophetess,
He said, who by her skill could guess
How close the fatal textures join
Which knit thy thread of life with mine;
Then dark he hinted of disguise
She framed to cheat too curious eyes
That not a moment might divide
Thy fated footsteps from my side.
Methought while thus my sire did teach
I caught the meaning of his speech,
Yet seems its purport doubtful now.'
His hand then sought his thoughtful brow —
Then first he marked, that in the tower
His glove was left at waking hour.

XII

Trembling at first and deadly pale,
Had Gunnar heard the visioned tale;

But when he learned the dubious close
He blushed like any opening rose,
And, glad to hide his tell-tale cheek,
Hied back that glove of mail to seek;
When soon a shriek of deadly dread
Summoned his master to his aid.

XIII

What sees Count Harold in that bower
So late his resting-place? —
The semblance of the Evil Power,
Adored by all his race!
Odin in living form stood there,
His cloak the spoils of Polar bear;
For plumy crest a meteor shed
Its gloomy radiance o'er his head,
Yet veiled its haggard majesty
To the wild lightnings of his eye.
Such height was his as when in stone
O'er Upsal's giant altar shown:
So flowed his hoary beard;
Such was his lance of mountain-pine,
So did his sevenfold buckler shine;
But when his voice he reared,
Deep without harshness, slow and strong,
The powerful accents rolled along,

And while he spoke his hand was laid
On captive Gunnar's shrinking head.

XIV

'Harold,' he said, 'what rage is thine
To quit the worship of thy line,
To leave thy Warrior-God? —
With me is glory or disgrace,
Mine is the onset and the chase,
Embattled hosts before my face
Are withered by a nod.
Wilt thou then forfeit that high seat
Deserved by many a dauntless feat
Among the heroes of thy line,
Eric and fiery Thorarine? —
Thou wilt not. Only I can give
The joys for which the valiant live,
Victory and vengeance — only I
Can give the joys for which they die,
The immortal tilt — the banquet full,
The brimming draught from foeman's skull.
Mine art thou, witness this thy glove,
The faithful pledge of vassal's love.'

XV

'Tempter,' said Harold, firm of heart,
'I charge thee, hence! whate'er thou art,

I do defy thee — and resist
The kindling frenzy of my breast,
Waked by thy words; and of my mail
Nor glove nor buckler, splent nor nail,
Shall rest with thee — that youth release,
And, God or Demon, part in peace.' —
'Eivir,' the Shape replied, 'is mine,
Marked in the birth-hour with my sign.
Think'st thou that priest with drops of spray
Could wash that blood-red mark away?
Or that a borrowed sex and name
Can abrogate a Godhead's claim?'
Thrilled this strange speech through Harold's brain,
He clenched his teeth in high disdain,
For not his new-born faith subdued
Some tokens of his ancient mood. —
'Now, by the hope so lately given
Of better trust and purer heaven,
I will assail thee, fiend!' — Then rose
His mace, and with a storm of blows
The mortal and the demon close.

XVI

Smoke rolled above, fire flashed around,
Darkened the sky and shook the ground;
But not the artillery of hell,

The bickering lightning, nor the rock
Of turrets to the earthquake's shock,
  Could Harold's courage quell.
Sternly the Dane his purpose kept,
And blows on blows resistless heaped,
  Till quailed that demon form,
And — for his power to hurt or kill
Was bounded by a higher will —
  Evanished in a storm.
Nor paused the Champion of the North,
But raised and bore his Eivir forth
From that wild scene of fiendish strife
To light, to liberty, and life!

XVII

He placed her on a bank of moss,
  A silver runnel bubbled by,
And new-born thoughts his soul engross,
And tremors yet unknown across
  His stubborn sinews fly,
The while with timid hand the dew
Upon her brow and neck he threw,
And marked how life with rosy hue
On her pale cheek revived anew
  And glimmered in her eye.
Inly he said, 'That silken tress —
What blindness mine that could not guess!

Or how could page's rugged dress
That bosom's pride belie?
O, dull of heart, through wild and wave
In search of blood and death to rave,
With such a partner nigh!'

XVIII

Then in the mirrored pool he peered,
Blamed his rough locks and shaggy beard,
The stains of recent conflict cleared, —
And thus the Champion proved
That he fears now who never feared,
And loves who never loved.
And Eivir — life is on her cheek,
And yet she will not move or speak,
Nor will her eyelid fully ope;
Perchance it loves, that half-shut eye,
Through its long fringe, reserved and shy,
Affection's opening dawn to spy;
And the deep blush, which bids its dye
O'er cheek and brow and bosom fly,
Speaks shamefacedness and hope.

XIX

But vainly seems the Dane to seek
For terms his new-born love to speak, —

For words, save those of wrath and wrong,
Till now were strangers to his tongue;
So, when he raised the blushing maid,
In blunt and honest terms he said —
'T were well that maids, when lovers woo,
Heard none more soft, were all as true —
'Eivir! since thou for many a day
Hast followed Harold's wayward way,
It is but meet that in the line
Of after-life I follow thine.
To-morrow is Saint Cuthbert's tide,
And we will grace his altar's side,
A Christian knight and Christian bride;
And of Witikind's son shall the marvel be said
That on the same morn he was christened and wed.'

CONCLUSION

And now, Ennui, what ails thee, weary maid?
And why these listless looks of yawning sorrow?
No need to turn the page as if 't were lead,
Or fling aside the volume till to-morrow. —
Be cheered — 'tis ended — and I will not borrow,
To try thy patience more, one anecdote
From Bartholine or Perinskiold or Snorro.
Then pardon thou thy minstrel, who hath wrote
A tale six cantos long, yet scorned to add a note.

THE FIELD OF WATERLOO

A POEM

Though Valois braved young Edward's gentle hand,
And Albert rush'd on Henry's way-worn band,
With Europe's chosen sons, in arms renown'd,
Yet not on Vere's bold archers long they look'd,
Nor Audley's squires nor Mowbray's yeomen brook'd, —
They saw their standard fall, and left their monarch bound.

AKENSIDE.

TO

HER GRACE

THE

DUCHESS OF WELLINGTON

PRINCESS OF WATERLOO

&c. &c. &c.

THE FOLLOWING VERSES

ARE MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

THE AUTHOR

THE FIELD OF WATERLOO

ADVERTISEMENT

It may be some apology for the imperfections of this poem, that it was composed hastily, and during a short tour upon the Continent, when the Author's labours were liable to frequent interruption; but its best apology is, that it was written for the purpose of assisting the Waterloo Subscription.

ABBOTSFORD, 1815.

I

FAIR Brussels, thou art far behind,
Though, lingering on the morning wind,
We yet may hear the hour
Pealed over orchard and canal,
With voice prolonged and measured fall,
From proud Saint Michael's tower;
Thy wood, dark Soignies, holds us now,
Where the tall beeches' glossy bough
For many a league around,
With birch and darksome oak between,
Spreads deep and far a pathless screen
Of tangled forest ground.
Stems planted close by stems defy
The adventurous foot — the curious eye
For access seeks in vain;

And the brown tapestry of leaves,
Strewed on the blighted ground, receives
  Nor sun nor air nor rain.
No opening glade dawns on our way,
No streamlet glancing to the ray
  Our woodland path has crossed;
And the straight causeway which we tread
Prolongs a line of dull arcade,
Unvarying through the unvaried shade
  Until in distance lost.

II

A brighter, livelier scene succeeds;
In groups the scattering wood recedes,
Hedge-rows, and huts, and sunny meads,
  And corn-fields glance between;
The peasant at his labour blithe
Plies the hooked staff and shortened scythe:[1] —
  But when these ears were green,
Placed close within destruction's scope,
Full little was that rustic's hope
  Their ripening to have seen!
And, lo! a hamlet and its fane: —
Let not the gazer with disdain
  Their architecture view;
For yonder rude ungraceful shrine

[1] See Note 79.

And disproportioned spire are thine,
Immortal WATERLOO!

III

Fear not the heat, though full and high
The sun has scorched the autumn sky,
And scarce a forest straggler now
To shade us spreads a greenwood bough;
These fields have seen a hotter day
Than e'er was fired by sunny ray.
Yet one mile on — yon shattered hedge
Crests the soft hill whose long smooth ridge
Looks on the field below,
And sinks so gently on the dale
That not the folds of Beauty's veil
In easier curves can flow.
Brief space from thence the ground again
Ascending slowly from the plain
Forms an opposing screen,
Which with its crest of upland ground
Shuts the horizon all around.
The softened vale between
Slopes smooth and fair for courser's tread;
Not the most timid maid need dread
To give her snow-white palfrey head
On that wide stubble-ground;
Nor wood nor tree nor bush are there,

Her course to intercept or scare,
Nor fosse nor fence are found,
Save where from out her shattered bowers
Rise Hougomont's dismantled towers.

IV

Now, see'st thou aught in this lone scene
Can tell of that which late hath been? —
A stranger might reply,
'The bare extent of stubble-plain
Seems lately lightened of its grain;
And yonder sable tracks remain
Marks of the peasant's ponderous wain
When harvest-home was nigh.
On these broad spots of trampled ground
Perchance the rustics danced such round
As Teniers loved to draw;
And where the earth seems scorched by flame,
To dress the homely feast they came,
And toiled the kerchiefed village dame
Around her fire of straw.'

V

So deem'st thou — so each mortal deems
Of that which is from that which seems: —
But other harvest here

Than that which peasant's scythe demands
Was gathered in by sterner hands,
  With bayonet, blade, and spear.
No vulgar crop was theirs to reap,
No stinted harvest thin and cheap!
Heroes before each fatal sweep
  Fell thick as ripened grain;
And ere the darkening of the day,
Piled high as autumn shocks there lay
The ghastly harvest of the fray,
  The corpses of the slain.

VI

Ay, look again — that line so black
And trampled marks the bivouac,
Yon deep-graved ruts the artillery's track,
  So often lost and won;
And close beside the hardened mud
Still shows where, fetlock-deep in blood,
The fierce dragoon through battle's flood
  Dashed the hot war-horse on.
These spots of excavation tell
The ravage of the bursting shell —
And feel'st thou not the tainted steam
That reeks against the sultry beam
  From yonder trenchèd mound?

The pestilential fumes declare
That Carnage has replenished there
  Her garner-house profound.

VII

Far other harvest-home and feast
Than claims the boor from scythe released
  On these scorched fields were known!
Death hovered o'er the maddening rout,
And in the thrilling battle-shout
Sent for the bloody banquet out
  A summons of his own.
Through rolling smoke the Demon's eye
Could well each destined guest espy.
Well could his ear in ecstasy
  Distinguish every tone
That filled the chorus of the fray —
From cannon-roar and trumpet-bray,
From charging squadrons' wild hurra,
From the wild clang that marked their way, —
  Down to the dying groan
And the last sob of life's decay
  When breath was all but flown.

VIII

Feast on, stern foe of mortal life,
Feast on! — but think not that a strife

With such promiscuous carnage rife
  Protracted space may last;
The deadly tug of war at length
Must limits find in human strength,
  And cease when these are past.
Vain hope! — that morn's o'erclouded sun
Heard the wild shout of fight begun
  Ere he attained his height,
And through the war-smoke volumed high
Still peals that unremitted cry,
  Though now he stoops to night.
For ten long hours of doubt and dread,
Fresh succours from the extended head
Of either hill the contest fed;
  Still down the slope they drew,
The charge of columns pausèd not,
Nor ceased the storm of shell and shot;
  For all that war could do
Of skill and force was proved that day,
And turned not yet the doubtful fray
  On bloody Waterloo.

IX

Pale Brussels! then what thoughts were thine,[1]
When ceaseless from the distant line
  Continued thunders came!

[1] See Note 80.

Each burgher held his breath to hear
These forerunners of havoc near,
  Of rapine and of flame
What ghastly sights were thine to meet,
When, rolling through thy stately street,
The wounded showed their mangled plight
In token of the unfinished fight,
And from each anguish-laden wain
The blood-drops laid thy dust like rain!
How often in the distant drum
Heard'st thou the fell invader come,
While Ruin, shouting to his band,
Shook high her torch and gory brand! —
Cheer thee, fair city! From yon stand
Impatient still his outstretched hand
  Points to his prey in vain,
While maddening in his eager mood
And all unwont to be withstood,
  He fires the fight again.

X

'On! On!' was still his stern exclaim;[1]
'Confront the battery's jaws of flame!
  Rush on the levelled gun!
My steel-clad cuirassiers, advance!
Each Hulan forward with his lance,

[1] See Note 81.

My Guard — my chosen — charge for France,
France and Napoleon!'
Loud answered their acclaiming shout,
Greeting the mandate which sent out
Their bravest and their best to dare
The fate their leader shunned to share,[1]
But HE, his country's sword and shield,
Still in the battle-front revealed
Where danger fiercest swept the field,
Came like a beam of light,
In action prompt, in sentence brief —
'Soldiers, stand firm!' exclaimed the chief,
'England shall tell the fight!'[2]

XI

On came the whirlwind — like the last
But fiercest sweep of tempest-blast —
On came the whirlwind — steel-gleams broke
Like lightning through the rolling smoke;
The war was waked anew,
Three hundred cannon-mouths roared loud,
And from their throats with flash and cloud
Their showers of iron threw.
Beneath their fire in full career
Rushed on the ponderous cuirassier,
The lancer couched his ruthless spear,

[1] See Note 82. [2] See Note 83.

And hurrying as to havoc near
The cohorts' eagles flew.
In one dark torrent broad and strong
The advancing onset rolled along,
Forth harbingered by fierce acclaim,
That from the shroud of smoke and flame
Pealed wildly the imperial name.

XII

But on the British heart were lost
The terrors of the charging host;
For not an eye the storm that viewed
Changed its proud glance of fortitude,
Nor was one forward footstep staid,
As dropped the dying and the dead.
Fast as their ranks the thunders tear,
Fast they renewed each serried square;
And on the wounded and the slain
Closed their diminished files again,
Till from their lines scarce spears' lengths three
Emerging from the smoke they see
Helmet and plume and panoply —
Then waked their fire at once!
Each musketeer's revolving knell,
As fast, as regularly fell,
As when they practise to display
Their discipline on festal day.

Then down went helm and lance,
Down were the eagle banners sent,
Down reeling steeds and riders went,
Corselets were pierced and pennons rent;
And to augment the fray,
Wheeled full against their staggering flanks,
The English horsemen's foaming ranks
Forced their resistless way.
Then to the musket-knell succeeds
The clash of swords, the neigh of steeds,
As plies the smith his clanging trade,[1]
Against the cuirass rang the blade;
And while amid their close array
The well-served cannon rent their way,
And while amid their scattered band
Raged the fierce rider's bloody brand,
Recoiled in common rout and fear
Lancer and guard and cuirassier,
Horsemen and foot, — a mingled host,
Their leaders fallen, their standards lost.

XIII

Then, WELLINGTON! thy piercing eye
This crisis caught of destiny —
The British host had stood
That morn 'gainst charge of sword and lance

[1] See Note 84.

As their own ocean-rocks hold stance,
But when thy voice had said, 'Advance!'
They were their ocean's flood. —
O thou whose inauspicious aim
Hath wrought thy host this hour of shame,
Think'st thou thy broken bands will bide
The terrors of yon rushing tide?
Or will thy chosen brook to feel
The British shock of levelled steel?[1]
Or dost thou turn thine eye
Where coming squadrons gleam afar,
And fresher thunders wake the war,
And other standards fly? —
Think not that in yon columns file
Thy conquering troops from distant Dyle —
Is Blucher yet unknown?
Or dwells not in thy memory still,
Heard frequent in thine hour of ill,
What notes of hate and vengeance thrill
In Prussia's trumpet tone? —
What yet remains? — shall it be thine
To head the relics of thy line
In one dread effort more? —
The Roman lore thy leisure loved,
And thou canst tell what fortune proved
That chieftain who of yore

[1] See Note 85.

Ambition's dizzy paths essayed,
And with the gladiators' aid
  For empire enterprised —
He stood the cast his rashness played,
Left not the victims he had made,
Dug his red grave with his own blade,
And on the field he lost was laid,
  Abhorred — but not despised.

XIV

But if revolves thy fainter thought
On safety — howsoever bought —
Then turn thy fearful rein and ride,
Though twice ten thousand men have died
  On this eventful day,
To gild the military fame
Which thou for life in traffic tame
  Wilt barter thus away.
Shall future ages tell this tale
Of inconsistence faint and frail?
And art thou he of Lodi's bridge,
Marengo's field, and Wagram's ridge!
  Or is thy soul like mountain-tide
That, swelled by winter storm and shower,
Rolls down in turbulence of power
  A torrent fierce and wide;
Reft of these aids, a rill obscure,

Shrinking unnoticed, mean and poor,
Whose channel shows displayed
The wrecks of its impetuous course,
But not one symptom of the force
By which these wrecks were made!

XV

Spur on thy way! — since now thine ear
Has brooked thy veterans' wish to hear,
Who as thy flight they eyed
Exclaimed — while tears of anguish came,
Wrung forth by pride and rage and shame —
'O, that he had but died!'
But yet, to sum this hour of ill,
Look ere thou leavest the fatal hill
Back on yon broken ranks —
Upon whose wild confusion gleams
The moon, as on the troubled streams
When rivers break their banks,
And to the ruined peasant's eye
Objects half seen roll swiftly by,
Down the dread current hurled —
So mingle banner, wain, and gun,
Where the tumultuous flight rolls on
Of warriors who when morn begun
Defied a banded world.

XVI

List — frequent to the hurrying rout,
The stern pursuers' vengeful shout
Tells that upon their broken rear
Rages the Prussian's bloody spear.
So fell a shriek was none
When Beresina's icy flood
Reddened and thawed with flame and blood
And, pressing on thy desperate way,
Raised oft and long their wild hurra
The children of the Don.
Thine ear no yell of horror cleft
So ominous when, all bereft
Of aid, the valiant Polack left —
Ay, left by thee — found soldier's grave
In Leipsic's corpse-encumbered wave.
Fate, in these various perils past,
Reserved thee still some future cast;
On the dread die thou now hast thrown
Hangs not a single field alone,
Nor one campaign — thy martial fame,
Thy empire, dynasty, and name,
Have felt the final stroke;
And now o'er thy devoted head
The last stern vial's wrath is shed,
The last dread seal is broke.

XVII

Since live thou wilt — refuse not now
Before these demagogues to bow,
Late objects of thy scorn and hate,
Who shall thy once imperial fate
Make wordy theme of vain debate. —
Or shall we say thou stoop'st less low
In seeking refuge from the foe,
Against whose heart in prosperous life
Thine hand hath ever held the knife?
  Such homage hath been paid
By Roman and by Grecian voice,
And there were honour in the choice,
  If it were freely made.
Then safely come — in one so low, —
So lost, — we cannot own a foe;
Though dear experience bid us end,
In thee we ne'er can hail a friend. —
Come, howsoe'er — but do not hide
Close in thy heart that germ of pride
Erewhile by gifted bard espied,
  That 'yet imperial hope';
Think not that for a fresh rebound,
To raise ambition from the ground,
  We yield thee means or scope.
In safety come — but ne'er again

Hold type of independent reign;
No islet calls thee lord,
We leave thee no confederate band,
No symbol of thy lost command,
To be a dagger in the hand
From which we wrenched the sword.

XVIII

Yet, even in yon sequestered spot,
May worthier conquest be thy lot
Than yet thy life has known;
Conquest unbought by blood or harm,
That needs nor foreign aid nor arm,
A triumph all thine own.
Such waits thee when thou shalt control
Those passions wild, that stubborn soul,
That marred thy prosperous scene: —
Hear this — from no unmovèd heart,
Which sighs, comparing what THOU ART
With what thou MIGHTST HAVE BEEN!

XIX

Thou too, whose deeds of fame renewed
Bankrupt a nation's gratitude,
To thine own noble heart must owe
More than the meed she can bestow.
For not a people's just acclaim,

Not the full hail of Europe's fame,
Thy prince's smiles, thy state's decree,
The ducal rank, the gartered knee,
Not these such pure delight afford
As that, when hanging up thy sword,
Well mayst thou think, 'This honest steel
Was ever drawn for public weal;
And, such was rightful Heaven's decree,
Ne'er sheathed unless with victory!'

XX

Look forth once more with softened heart
Ere from the field of fame we part;
Triumph and sorrow border near,
And joy oft melts into a tear.
Alas! what links of love that morn
Has War's rude hand asunder torn!
For ne'er was field so sternly fought,
And ne'er was conquest dearer bought.
Here piled in common slaughter sleep
Those whom affection long shall weep:
Here rests the sire that ne'er shall strain
His orphans to his heart again;
The son whom on his native shore
The parent's voice shall bless no more;
The bridegroom who has hardly pressed
His blushing consort to his breast;

The husband whom through many a year
Long love and mutual faith endear.
Thou canst not name one tender tie
But here dissolved its relics lie!
O, when thou see'st some mourner's veil
Shroud her thin form and visage pale,
Or mark'st the matron's bursting tears
Stream when the stricken drum she hears,
Or see'st how manlier grief suppressed
Is labouring in a father's breast, —
With no inquiry vain pursue
The cause, but think on Waterloo!

XXI

Period of honour as of woes,
What bright careers 't was thine to close! —
Marked on thy roll of blood what names
To Briton's memory and to Fame's
Laid there their last immortal claims!
Thou saw'st in seas of gore expire
Redoubted PICTON'S soul of fire —
Saw'st in the mingled carnage lie
All that of PONSONBY could die —
DE LANCEY change Love's bridal-wreath
For laurels from the hand of Death —
Saw'st gallant MILLER'S failing eye
Still bent where Albion's banners fly,

And CAMERON in the shock of steel
Die like the offspring of Lochiel;
And generous GORDON mid the strife
Fall while he watched his leader's life. —
Ah! though her guardian angel's shield
Fenced Britain's hero through the field,
Fate not the less her power made known
Through his friends' hearts to pierce his own!

XXII

Forgive, brave dead, the imperfect lay!
Who may your names, your numbers, say?
What high-strung harp, what lofty line,
To each the dear-earned praise assign,
From high-born chiefs of martial fame
To the poor soldier's lowlier name?
Lightly ye rose that dawning day
From your cold couch of swamp and clay,
To fill before the sun was low
The bed that morning cannot know. —
Oft may the tear the green sod steep,
And sacred be the heroes' sleep
  Till time shall cease to run;
And ne'er beside their noble grave
May Briton pass and fail to crave
A blessing on the fallen brave
  Who fought with Wellington!

XXIII

Farewell, sad field! whose blighted face
Wears desolation's withering trace;
Long shall my memory retain
Thy shattered huts and trampled grain,
With every mark of martial wrong
That scathe thy towers, fair Hougomont!
Yet though thy garden's green arcade
The marksman's fatal post was made,
Though on thy shattered beeches fell
The blended rage of shot and shell,
Though from thy blackened portals torn
Their fall thy blighted fruit-trees mourn,
Has not such havoc bought a name
Immortal in the rolls of fame?
Yes — Agincourt may be forgot,
And Cressy be an unknown spot,
  And Blenheim's name be new;
But still in story and in song,
For many an age remembered long,
Shall live the towers of Hougomont
  And Field of Waterloo.

CONCLUSION

STERN tide of human time! that know'st not rest,
But, sweeping from the cradle to the tomb,
Bear'st ever downward on thy dusky breast
Successive generations to their doom;
While thy capacious stream has equal room
For the gay bark where Pleasure's streamers sport
And for the prison-ship of guilt and gloom,
The fisher-skiff and barge that bears a court,
Still wafting onward all to one dark silent port; —

Stern tide of time! through what mysterious change
Of hope and fear have our frail barks been driven!
For ne'er before vicissitude so strange
Was to one race of Adam's offspring given.
And sure such varied change of sea and heaven,
Such unexpected bursts of joy and woe,
Such fearful strife as that where we have striven,
Succeeding ages ne'er again shall know
Until the awful term when thou shalt cease to flow.

Well hast thou stood, my Country! — the brave
fight
Hast well maintained through good report and ill;

In thy just cause and in thy native might,
And in Heaven's grace and justice constant still;
Whether the banded prowess, strength, and skill
Of half the world against thee stood arrayed,
Or when with better views and freer will
Beside thee Europe's noblest drew the blade,
Each emulous in arms the Ocean Queen to aid.

Well art thou now repaid — though slowly rose,
And struggled long with mists thy blaze of fame,
While like the dawn that in the orient glows.
On the broad wave its earlier lustre came;
Then eastern Egypt saw the growing flame,
And Maida's myrtles gleamed beneath its ray,
Where first the soldier, stung with generous shame,
Rivalled the heroes of the watery way,
And washed in foemen's gore unjust reproach away.

Now, Island Empress, wave thy crest on high,
And bid the banner of thy Patron flow,
Gallant Saint George, the flower of chivalry,
For thou hast faced like him a dragon foe,
And rescued innocence from overthrow,
And trampled down like him tyrannic might,
And to the gazing world mayst proudly show
The chosen emblem of thy sainted knight,
Who quelled devouring pride and vindicated right.

Yet mid the confidence of just renown,
Renown dear-bought, but dearest thus acquired,
Write, Britain, write the moral lesson down:
'T is not alone the heart with valour fired,
The discipline so dreaded and admired,
In many a field of bloody conquest known; —
Such may by fame be lured, by gold be hired —
'T is constancy in the good cause alone
Best justifies the meed thy valiant sons have won.

NOTES AND GLOSSARY

NOTES

Note 1, p. 11

Ua-var, as the name is pronounced, or more properly Uaighmor, is a mountain to the northeast of the village of Callender in Menteith, deriving its name, which signifies the great den, or cavern, from a sort of retreat among the rocks on the south side, said by tradition to have been the abode of a giant. In latter times it was the refuge of robbers and banditti, who have been only extirpated within these forty or fifty years. Strictly speaking, this stronghold is not a cave, as the name would imply, but a sort of small enclosure or recess surrounded with large rocks, and open above head. It may have been originally designed as a toil for deer, who might get in from the outside but would find it difficult to return. This opinion prevails among the old sportsmen and deer-stalkers in the neighbourhood.

Note 2, p. 14

'The hounds which we call Saint Hubert's hounds, are commonly all blacke, yet neuertheless, their race is so mingled at these days, that we find them of all colours. These are the hounds which the abbots of St. Hubert haue always kept some of their race or kind, in honour or remembrance of the saint, which was a hunter with S. Eustace. Whereupon we may concieue that (by the grace of God) all good huntsmen shall follow them into paradise. To return vnto my former purpose, this kind of dogges hath beene dispersed through the counties of Henault, Lorayne, Flanders, and Burgoyne. They are mighty of body, neuertheless their legges are low and short, likewise they are not swift, although they be very good of sent, hunting chaces which are farre straggled, fearing neither water nor cold, and doe more couet the chaces that smell, as foxes, bore, and such like, than

other, because they find themselves neither of swiftness nor courage to hunt and kill the chaces that are lighter and swifter. The bloodhounds of this colour proue good, especially those that are cole blacke, but I made no great account to breede on them, or to keepe the kind, and yet I found a book which a hunter did dedicate to a prince of Lorayne, which seemed to loue hunting much, wherein was a blason which the same hunter gaue to his bloodhound, called Souyllard, which was white: —

> My name came first from holy Hubert's race,
> Souyllard my sire, a hound of singular grace.

Whereupon we may presume that some of the kind prooue white sometimes, but they are not of the kind of the Greffiers or Bouxes, which we haue at these dayes.' (*The noble Art of Venerie or Hunting, translated and collected for the Use of all Noblemen and Gentlemen*, London, 1611, 4to, p. 15.)

Note 3, p. 15

When the stag turned to bay, the ancient hunter had the perilous task of going in upon and killing or disabling the desperate animal. At certain times of the year this was held particularly dangerous, a wound received from a stag's horn being then deemed poisonous, and more dangerous than one from the tusks of a boar, as the old rhyme testifies: —

> If thou be hurt with hart, it brings thee to thy bier,
> But barber's hand will boar's hurt heal, therefore thou need'st not fear.

At all times, however, the task was dangerous, and to be adventured upon wisely and warily, either by getting behind the stag while he was gazing on the hounds, or by watching an opportunity to gallop roundly in upon him and kill him with the sword. See many directions to this purpose in the *Booke of Hunting*, chap. 41. Wilson the historian has recorded a providential escape which befell him in this hazardous sport, while a youth and follower of the Earl of Essex.

'Sir Peter Lee, of Lime, in Cheshire, invited my lord one summer to hunt the stagg. And having a great stagg in chase,

and many gentlemen in the pursuit, the stagg took soyle. And divers, whereof I was one, alighted, and stood with swords drawne, to have a cut at him, at his coming out of the water. The staggs there being wonderfully fierce and dangerous, made us youths more eager to be at him. But he escaped us all. And it was my misfortune to be hindered of my coming nere him, the way being sliperie, by a falle; which gave occasion to some, who did not know mee, to speak as if I had falne for feare. Which being told mee, I left the stagg, and followed the gentleman who [first] spake it. But I found him of that cold temper, that it seems his words made an escape from him; as by his denial and repentance it appeared. But this made mee more violent in the pursuit of the stagg, to recover my reputation. And I happened to be the only horseman in, when the dogs sett him up at bay; and approaching near him on horsebacke, he broke through the dogs, and run at mee, and tore my horse's side with his hornes, close by my thigh. Then I quitted my horse, and grew more cunning, (for the dogs had sette him up againe,) stealing behind him with my sword, and cut his hamstrings; and then got upon his back, and cut his throate; which, as I was doing, the company came in, and blamed my rashness for running such a hazard.' (Peck's *Desiderata Curiosa*, II, 464.)

NOTE 4, p. 20

Until the present road was made through the romantic pass which I have presumptuously attempted to describe in the preceding stanzas, there was no mode of issuing out of the defile, called the Trosachs, excepting by a sort of ladder composed of the branches and roots of trees.

NOTE 5, p. 22

The clans who inhabited the romantic regions in the neighbourhood of Loch Katrine were, even until a late period, much addicted to predatory excursions upon their Lowland neighbours.

'In former times, those parts of this district, which are situated beyond the Grampian range, were rendered almost inaccessible by strong barriers of rocks, and mountains, and lakes. It was a border country, and though on the very verge of the low country, it was almost totally sequestered from the world, and, as it were, insulated with respect to society. 'T is well known that in the Highlands, it was, in former times, accounted not only lawful but honourable, among hostile tribes, to commit depredations on one another; and these habits of the age were perhaps strengthened in this district, by the circumstances which have been mentioned. It bordered on a country, the inhabitants of which, while they were richer, were less warlike than they, and widely differenced by language and manners.' (Graham's *Sketches of Scenery in Perthshire*, Edinburgh, 1806, p. 97.)

The reader will therefore be pleased to remember that the scene of this poem is laid in a time, —

> When tooming faulds, or sweeping of a glen,
> Had still been held the deed of gallant men.

Note 6, p. 28

If force of evidence could authorise us to believe facts inconsistent with the general laws of nature, enough might be produced in favour of the existence of the second-sight. It is called in Gaelic *Taishitaraugh*, from *Taish*, an unreal or shadowy appearance; and those possessed of the faculty are called *Taishatrin*, which may be aptly translated visionaries. Martin, a steady believer in the second-sight, gives the following account of it: —

'The second-sight is a singular faculty, of seeing an otherwise invisible object, without any previous means used by the person that used it for that end; the vision makes such a lively impression upon the seers, that they neither see, nor think of any thing else, except the vision, as long as it continues; and then they appear pensive or jovial, according to the object which was represented to them.

'At the sight of a vision, the eyelids of the person are erected, and the eyes continue staring until the object vanish. This is obvious to others who are by, when the persons happen to see a vision, and occurred more than once to my own observation, and to others that were with me.

'There is one in Skie, of whom his acquaintance observed, that when he sees a vision, the inner part of his eyelids turns so far upwards, that, after the object disappears, he must draw them down with his fingers, and sometimes employ others to draw them down, which he finds to be the much easier way.

'This faculty of the second-sight does not lineally descend in a family, as some imagine, for I know several parents who are endowed with it, but their children not, and *vice versa;* neither is it acquired by any previous compact. And, after a strict enquiry, I could never learn that this faculty was communicable any way whatsoever.

'The seer knows neither the object, time, nor place of a vision, before it appears; and the same object is often seen by different persons, living at a considerable distance from one another. The true way of judging as to the time and circumstance of an object, is by observation; for several persons of judgment, without this faculty, are more capable to judge of the design of a vision, than a novice that is a seer. If an object appear in the day or night, it will come to pass sooner or later accordingly.

'If an object is seen early in the morning, (which is not frequent,) it will be accomplished in a few hours afterwards. If at noon, it will commonly be accomplished that very day. If in the evening, perhaps that night; if after candles be lighted, it will be accomplished that night: the later always in accomplishment, by weeks, months, and sometimes years, according to the time of night the vision is seen.

'When a shroud is perceived about one, it is a sure prognostic of death; the time is judged according to the height of it about the person; for if it is seen above the middle, death is not to be expected for the space of a year, and perhaps some months longer; and as it is frequently seen to ascend higher towards the

head, death is concluded to be at hand within a few days, if not hours, as daily experience confirms. Examples of this kind were shown me, when the persons of whom the observations were then made, enjoyed perfect health.

'One instance was later foretold by a seer, that was a novice, concerning the death of one of my acquaintance; this was communicated to a few only, and with great confidence: I being one of the number, did not in the least regard it, until the death of the person, about the time foretold, did confirm me of the certainty of the prediction. The novice mentioned above is now a skilful seer, as appears from many late instances; he lives in the parish of St. Mary's, the most northern in Skie.

'If a woman is seen standing at a man's left hand, it is a presage that she will be his wife, whether they be married to others, or unmarried at the time of the apparition.

'If two or three women are seen at once near a man's left hand, she that is next him will undoubtedly be his wife first, and so on, whether all three, or the man, be single or married at the time of the vision or not; of which there are several late instances among those of my acquaintance. It is an ordinary thing for them to see a man that is to come to the house shortly after: and if he is not of the seer's acquaintance, yet he gives such a lively description of his stature, complexion, habit, &c. that upon his arrival he answers the character given him in all respects.

'If the person so appearing be one of the seer's acquaintance, he will tell his name, as well as other particulars; and he can tell by his countenance whether he comes in a good or bad humour.

'I have been seen thus myself by seers of both sexes, at some hundred miles' distance; some that saw me in this manner had never seen me personally, and it happened according to their vision, without any previous design of mine to go to those places, my coming there being purely accidental.

'It is ordinary with them to see houses, gardens, and trees, in places void of all three; and this in progress of time uses to be accomplished: as at Mogshot, in the Isle of Skie, where there were but a few sorry cowhouses, thatched with straw, yet in a

very few years after, the vision, which appeared often, was accomplished, by the building of several good houses on the very spot represented by the seers, and by the planting of orchards there.

'To see a spark of fire fall upon one's arm or breast, is a forerunner of a dead child to be seen in the arms of those persons; of which there are several fresh instances.

'To see a seat empty at the time of one's sitting in it, is a presage of that person's death soon after.

'When a novice, or one that has lately obtained the second-sight, sees a vision in the night-time without doors, and he be near a fire, he presently falls into a swoon.

'Some find themselves as it were in a crowd of people, having a corpse which they carry along with them; and after such visions the seers come in sweating, and describe the people that appeared: if there be any of their acquaintance among 'em, they give an account of their names, as also of the bearers, but they know nothing concerning the corpse.

'All those who have the second-sight do not always see these visions at once, though they be together at the time. But if one who has this faculty, designedly touch his fellow-seer at the instant of a vision's appearing, then the second sees it as well as the first; and this is sometimes discerned by those that are near them on such occasions.' (Martin's *Description of the Western Islands*, 1716, 8vo, p. 300 *et seq.*)

To these particulars innumerable examples might be added, all attested by grave and credible authors. But in despite of evidence which neither Bacon, Boyle, nor Johnson were able to resist, the *Taish* with all its visionary properties seems to be now universally abandoned to the use of poetry. The exquisitely beautiful poem of *Lochiel* will at once occur to the recollection of every reader.

NOTE 7, p. 30

The Celtic chieftains, whose lives were continually exposed to peril, had usually, in the most retired spot of their domains,

some place of retreat for the hour of necessity, which, as circumstances would admit, was a tower, a cavern, or a rustic hut in a strong and secluded situation. One of these last gave refuge to the unfortunate Charles Edward, in his perilous wanderings after the battle of Culloden.

'It was situated in the face of a very rough, high, and rocky mountain, called Letternilichk, still a part of Benalder, full of great stones and crevices, and some scattered wood interspersed. The habitation called the Cage, in the face of that mountain, was within a small thick bush of wood. There were first some rows of trees laid down, in order to level the floor for a habitation; and as the place was steep, this raised the lower side to an equal height with the other: and these trees, in the way of joists or planks, were levelled with earth and gravel. There were betwixt the trees, growing naturally on their own roots, some stakes fixed in the earth, which, with the trees, were interwoven with ropes, made of heath and birch twigs, up to the top of the Cage, it being of a round or rather oval shape; and the whole thatched and covered over with fog. The whole fabric hung, as it were, by a large tree, which reclined from the one end, all along the roof, to the other, and which gave it the name of the Cage; and by chance there happened to be two stones at a small distance from one another, in the side next the precipice, resembling the pillars of a chimney, where the fire was placed. The smoke had its vent out here, all along the fall of the rock, which was so much of the same colour, that one could discover no difference in the clearest day.' (Home's *History of the Rebellion*, London, 1802, 4to, p. 381.)

NOTE 8, p. 33

These two sons of Anak flourished in romantic fable. The first is well known to the admirers of Ariosto, by the name of Ferrau. He was an antagonist of Orlando, and was at length slain by him in single combat. There is a romance in the Auchinleck MS., in which Ferragus is thus described: —

On a day come tiding
Unto Charls the King,
Al of a doughti knight
Was comen to Navers,
Stout he was and fers,
Vernagu he hight.
Of Babiloun the soudan
Thider him sende gan,
With King Charls to fight.
So hard he was to-fond[1]
That no dint of brond
No greued him, aplight.
He hadde twenti men strengthe
And forti fet of lengthe,
Thilke painim hede,[2]
And four feet in the face,
Y-meten[3] in the place,
And fifteen in brede.[4]
His nose was a fot and more;
His brow, as bristles wore; [5]
He that it seighe it sede.
He loked lotheliche,
And was swart [6] as any piche,
Of him men might adrede.

Romance of Charlemagne, ll. 461–484; Auchinleck MS., fol. 265.

Ascapart, or Ascabart, makes a very material figure in the *History of Bevis of Hampton*, by whom he was conquered. His effigies may be seen guarding one side of a gate at Southampton, while the other is occupied by Sir Bevis himself. The dimensions of Ascabart were little inferior to those of Ferragus, if the following description be correct: —

They metten with a geaunt,
With a lotheliche semblaunt.
He was wonderliche strong,
Rome[7] thretti fote long.
His berd was bot gret and rowe;[8]
A space of a fot betweene is[9] browe:
His clob was, to yeue[10] a strok,
A lite bodi of an oak.[11]

Beues hadde of him wonder gret,
And askede him what a het,[12]
And yaf[13] men of his contre
Were ase meche[14] ase was he.
'Me name,' a sede,[15] 'is Ascopard,
Garci me sent hiderward,
For to bring this quene ayen,
And the Beues her of-slen.[16]

[1] Found, proved. [2] Had. [3] Measured. [4] Breadth. [5] Were. [6] Black. [7] Fully. [8] Rough. [9] His. [10] Give. [11] The stem of a little oak-tree. [12] He hight, was called. [13] If. [14] Great. [15] He said. [16] Slay.

Icham Garci is[1] champioun,
And was i-driue out of me[2] toun
Al for that ich was so lite.[3]
Eueri man me wolde smite,
Ich was so lite and so merugh,[4]
Eueri man me clepede dwerugh.[5]
And now icham in this londe,
I wax mor[6] ich understonde,
And stranger than other tene;[7]
And that schel on us be sene.'

Sir Bevis of Hampton, l. 2512; Auchinleck MS., fol. 189.

NOTE 9, p. 33

The Highlanders, who carried hospitality to a punctilious excess, are said to have considered it as churlish to ask a stranger his name or lineage before he had taken refreshment. Feuds were so frequent among them that a contrary rule would in many cases have produced the discovery of some circumstance which might have excluded the guest from the benefit of the assistance he stood in need of.

NOTE 10, p. 35

'They' (meaning the Highlanders) 'delight much in musicke, but chiefly in harps and clairschoes of their own fashion. The strings of the clairschoes are made of brass wire, and the strings of the harps of sinews; which strings they strike either with their nayles, growing long, or else with an instrument appointed for that use. They take great pleasure to decke their harps and clairschoes with silver and precious stones; the poore ones that cannot attayne hereunto, decke them with christall. They sing verses prettily compound, contayning (for the most part) prayses of valiant men. There is not almost any other argument, whereof their rhymes intreat. They speak the ancient French language, altered a little.'[8]

'The harp and clairschoes are now only heard of in the Highlands in ancient song. At what period these instruments ceased to be used, is not on record; and tradition is silent on this head.

[1] His. [2] My. [3] Little. [4] Lean. [5] Dwarf. [6] Greater, taller. [7] Ten.
[8] *Certayne Matters concerning the Realme of Scotland, etc., as they were Anno Domini 1597*. London, 1603, 4to.

But, as Irish harpers occasionally visited the Highlands and Western Isles till lately, the harp might have been extant so late as the middle of the present century. Thus far we know, that from remote times down to the present, harpers were received as welcome guests, particularly in the Highlands of Scotland; and so late as the latter end of the sixteenth century, as appears by the above quotation, the harp was in common use among the natives of the Western Isles. How it happened that the noisy and inharmonious bagpipe banished the soft and expressive harp, we cannot say; but certain it is, that the bagpipe is now the only instrument that obtains universally in the Highland districts.' (Campbell's *Journey through North Britain*, London, 1808, 4to, I, 175.)

Mr. Gunn of Edinburgh has lately published a curious *Essay upon the Harp and Harp Music of the Highlands of Scotland.* That the instrument was once in common use there is most certain. Cleland numbers an acquaintance with it among the few accomplishments which his satire allows to the Highlanders: —

> In nothing they 're accounted sharp,
> Except in bagpipe or in harp.

Note 11, p. 41

That Highland chieftains to a late period retained in their service the bard, as a family officer, admits of very easy proof. The author of the *Letters from the North of Scotland*, an officer of engineers, quartered at Inverness about 1720, who certainly cannot be deemed a favourable witness, gives the following account of the office, and of a bard, whom he heard exercise his talent of recitation: —

'The bard is skilled in the genealogy of all the Highland families, sometimes preceptor to the young laird, celebrates in Irish verse the original of the tribe, the famous warlike actions of the successive heads, and sings his own lyricks as an opiate to the chief, when indisposed for sleep; but poets are not equally esteemed and honoured in all countries. I happened to be a witness of the dishonour done to the muse, at the house of one of the

chiefs, where two of these bards were set at a good distance, at the lower end of a long table, with a parcel of Highlanders of no extraordinary appearance, over a cup of ale. Poor inspiration! They were not asked to drink a glass of wine at our table, though the whole company consisted only of the *great man*, one of his near relations, and myself. After some little time, the chief ordered one of them to sing me a Highland song. The bard readily obeyed, and with a hoarse voice, and in a tune of few various notes, began, as I was told, one of his own lyricks; and when he had proceeded to the fourth or fifth stanza, I perceived, by the names of several persons, glens, and mountains, which I had known or heard of before, that it was an account of some clan battle. But in his going on, the chief (who piques himself upon his school-learning) at some particular passage, bid him cease, and cryed out, "There's nothing like that in Virgil or Homer." I bowed, and told him I believed so. This you may believe was very edifying and delightful.' (*Letters*, II, 167.)

Note 12, p. 45

The ancient and powerful family of Graham (which for metrical reasons is here spelled after the Scottish pronunciation) held extensive possessions in the counties of Dumbarton and Stirling. Few families can boast of more historical renown, having claim to three of the most remarkable characters in the Scottish annals. Sir John the Græme, the faithful and undaunted partaker of the labours and patriotic warfare of Wallace, fell in the unfortunate field of Falkirk, in 1298. The celebrated Marquis of Montrose, in whom De Retz saw realised his abstract idea of the heroes of antiquity, was the second of these worthies. And notwithstanding the severity of his temper and the rigour with which he executed the oppressive mandates of the princes whom he served, I do not hesitate to name as a third, John Græme of Claverhouse, Viscount of Dundee, whose heroic death in the arms of victory may be allowed to cancel the memory of his cruelty to the Nonconformists during the reigns of Charles II and James II.

Note 13, p. 46

I am not prepared to show that St. Modan was a performer on the harp. It was, however, no unsaintly accomplishment; for St. Dunstan certainly did play upon that instrument, which retaining, as was natural, a portion of the sanctity attached to its master's character, announced future events by its spontaneous sound.

'But labouring once in these mechanic arts for a devout matrone that had sett him on work, his violl, that hung by him on the wall, of its own accord, without anie man's helpe, distinctly sounded this anthime: *Gaudent in cœlis animæ sanctorum qui Christi vestigia sunt secuti; et quia pro eius amore sanguinem suum fuderunt, ideo cum Christo gaudent æternum.* Whereat all the companie being much astonished, turned their eyes from beholding him working, to looke on that strange accident. . . . Not long after, manie of the court that hitherunto had borne a kind of fayned freindship towards him, began now greatly to envie at his progresse and rising in goodnes, using manie crooked, backbiting meanes to diffame his vertues with the black maskes of hypocrisie. And the better to authorise their calumnie, they brought in this that happened in the violl, affirming it to have been done by art magick. What more? this wicked rumour encreased dayly, till the king and others of the nobilitie taking hould thereof, Dunstan grew odious in their sight. Therefore he resolued to leaue the court, and goe to Elphegus, surnamed the Bauld, then bishop of Winchester, who was his cozen. Which his enemies understanding, they layd wayt for him in the way, and hauing throwne him off his horse, beate him, and dragged him in the durt in the most miserable manner, meaning to have slaine him, had not a companie of mastiue dogges, that came unlookt uppon them, defended and redeemed him from their crueltie. When with sorrow he was ashamed to see dogges more humane than they. And giuing thankes to Almightie God, he sensibly againe perceiued that the tunes of his violl had giuen him a warning of future accidents.' (*Flower of the Lives of the*

most renowned Saincts of England, Scotland, and Ireland, by the R. Father Hierome Porter, Doway, 1632, 4to, I, 438.)

The same supernatural circumstance is alluded to by the anonymous author of *Grim, the Collier of Croydon*.

[*Dunstan's harp sounds on the wall.*]

Forest. Hark, hark, my lords, the holy abbot's harp
Sounds by itself so hanging on the wall!
Dunstan. Unhallow'd man, that scorn'st the sacred rede,
Hark, how the testimony of my truth
Sounds heavenly music with an angel's hand,
To testify Dunstan's integrity,
And prove thy active boast of no effect.

NOTE 14, p. 47

The downfall of the Douglases of the house of Angus, during the reign of James V, is the event alluded to in the text. The Earl of Angus, it will be remembered, had married the queen dowager, and availed himself of the right which he thus acquired, as well as of his extensive power, to retain the king in a sort of tutelage which approached very near to captivity. Several open attempts were made to rescue James from this thraldom, with which he was well known to be deeply disgusted; but the valour of the Douglases and their allies gave them the victory in every conflict. At length the king, while residing at Falkland, contrived to escape by night out of his own court and palace, and rode full speed to Stirling Castle, where the governor, who was of the opposite faction, joyfully received him. Being thus at liberty, James speedily summoned around him such peers as he knew to be most inimical to the domination of Angus and laid his complaint before them, says Pitscottie, 'with great lamentations: showing to them how he was holden in subjection, thir years bygone, by the Earl of Angus, and his kin and friends, who oppressed the whole country, and spoiled it, under the pretence of justice and his authority; and had slain many of his lieges, kinsmen, and friends, because they would have had it mended at their hands, and put him at liberty, as he ought to have been, at the counsel of his whole lords, and not have been subjected

and corrected with no particular men, by the rest of his nobles: Therefore, said he, I desire, my lords, that I may be satisfied of the said earl, his kin, and friends; for I avow, that Scotland shall not hold us both, while [i.e., till] I be revenged on him and his.

'The lords hearing the king's complaint and lamentation, and also the great rage, fury, and malice, that he bore toward the Earl of Angus, his kin and friends, they concluded all, and thought it best that he should be summoned to underly the law; if he found no caution, nor yet compear himself, that he should be put to the horn, with all his kin and friends, so many as were contained in the letters. And farther, the lords ordained, by advice of his majesty, that his brother and friends should be summoned to find caution to underly the law within a certain day, or else be put to the horn. But the earl appeared not, nor none for him; and so he was put to the horn, with all his kin and friends: so many as were contained in the summons, that compeared not, were banished, and holden traitors to the king.'

NOTE 15, p. 50

This was by no means an uncommon occurrence in the Court of Scotland; nay, the presence of the sovereign himself scarcely restrained the ferocious and inveterate feuds which were the perpetual source of bloodshed among the Scottish nobility. The following instance of the murder of Sir William Stuart of Ochiltree called "The Bloody," by the celebrated Francis, Earl of Bothwell, may be produced among many; but as the offence given in the royal court will hardly bear a vernacular translation, I shall leave the story in Johnstone's Latin, referring for further particulars to the naked simplicity of Birrell's *Diary*, July 30, 1588.

'*Mors improbi hominis non tam ipsa immerita, quam pessimo exemplo in publicum, fædè perpetrata. Gulielmus Stuartus Alkiltrius, Arani frater, naturâ ac moribus, cujus sæpius memini, vulgo propter sitem sanguinis* sanguinarius *dictus, à Bothvelio, in Sanctæ*

Crucis Regiâ, exardescente irâ, mendacii probro lacessitus, obscœnum osculum liberius retorquebat; Bothvelius hanc contumeliam tacitus tulit, sed ingentum irarum molem animo concepit. Utrinque postridie Edinburgi conventum, totidem numero comitibus armatis, præsidii causa, et acriter pugnatum est; cæteris amicis et clientibus metu torpentibus, aut vi absterritis, ipse Stuartus fortissimè dimicat; tandem excusso gladio à Bothvelio, Scythicâ feritate transfoditur, sine cujusquam misericordiâ; habuit itaque quem debuit exitum. Dignus erat Stuartus qui pateretur; Bothvelius qui faceret. Vulgus sanguinem sanguine prædicabit, et horum cruore innocuorum manibus egregiè parentatum.' (Johnstoni *Historia Rerum Britannicarum*, ab anno 1572 ad annum 1628. Amstelodami, 1655, fol. p. 135.)

Note 16, p. 51

The exiled state of this powerful race is not exaggerated in this and subsequent passages. The hatred of James against the race of Douglas was so inveterate that numerous as their allies were, and disregarded as the regal authority had usually been in similar cases, their nearest friends, even in the most remote parts of Scotland, durst not entertain them, unless under the strictest and closest disguise. James Douglas, son of the banished Earl of Angus (afterwards well known by the title of Earl of Morton), lurked, during the exile of his family, in the north of Scotland under the assumed name of James Innes, otherwise James the Grieve, (*i.e.*, reve or bailiff.) 'And as he bore the name,' says Godscroft, 'so did he also execute the office of a grieve or overseer of the lands and rents, the corn and cattle of him with whom he lived.' From the habits of frugality and observation which he acquired in his humble situation, the historian traces that intimate acquaintance with popular character which enabled him to rise so high in the state, and that honourable economy by which he repaired and established the shattered estates of Angus and Morton. (*History of the House of Douglas*, Edinburgh, 1743, II, 160.)

NOTE 17, p. 52

The parish of Kilmaronock at the eastern extremity of Loch Lomond derives its name from a cell or chapel dedicated to St. Maronoch, or Marnoch, or Maronnan, about whose sanctity very little is now remembered. There is a fountain devoted to him in the same parish; but its virtues, like the merits of its patron, have fallen into oblivion.

NOTE 18, p. 52

This is a beautiful cascade made by a mountain stream called the Keltie, at a place called the Bridge of Bracklinn, about a mile from the village of Callender, in Menteith. Above a chasm, where the brook precipitates itself from a height of at least fifty feet, there is thrown, for the convenience of the neighbourhood, a rustic footbridge of about three feet in breadth and without ledges, which is scarcely to be crossed by a stranger without awe and apprehension.

NOTE 19, p. 54

Archibald, the third Earl of Douglas, was so unfortunate in all his enterprises that he acquired the epithet of Tine-man, because he *tined*, or lost, his followers in every battle which he fought. He was vanquished, as every reader must remember, in the bloody battle of Homildon-hill, near Wooler, where he himself lost an eye and was made prisoner by Hotspur. He was no less unfortunate when allied with Percy, being wounded and taken at the battle of Shrewsbury. He was so unsuccessful in an attempt to besiege Roxburgh Castle that it was called the 'Foul Raid,' or disgraceful expedition. His ill fortune left him indeed at the battle of Beaugé, in France; but it was only to return with double emphasis at the subsequent action of Vernoil, the last and most unlucky of his encounters, in which he fell, with the flower of the Scottish chivalry, then serving as auxiliaries in France, and about two thousand common soldiers, A.D. 1424.

Note 20, p. 54

The ancient warriors, whose hope and confidence rested chiefly in their blades, were accustomed to deduce omens from them, especially from such as were supposed to have been fabricated by enchanted skill, of which we have various instances in the romances and legends of the time. The wonderful sword Skofnung, wielded by the celebrated Hrolf Kraka, was of this description. It was deposited in the tomb of the monarch at death, and taken from thence by Skeggo, a celebrated pirate, who bestowed it upon his son-in-law, Kormak, with the following curious directions: — '"The manner of using it will appear strange to you. A small bag is attached to it, which take heed not to violate. Let not the rays of the sun touch the upper part of the handle, nor unsheathe it, unless thou art ready for battle. But when thou comest to the place of fight, go aside from the rest, grasp and extend the sword, and breathe upon it. Then a small worm will creep out of the handle; lower the handle, that he may more easily return into it." Kormak, after having received the sword, returned home to his mother. He showed the sword, and attempted to draw it, as unnecessarily as ineffectually, for he could not pluck it out of the sheath. His mother, Dalla, exclaimed, "Do not despise the counsel given to thee, my son." Kormak however, repeating his efforts, pressed down the handle with his feet, and tore off the bag, when Skofnung emitted a hollow groan; but still he could not unsheathe the sword. Kormak then went out with Bessus, whom he had challenged to fight with him, and drew apart at the place of combat. He sat down upon the ground, and ungirding the sword, which he bore above his vestments, did not remember to shield the hilt from the rays of the sun. In vain he endeavoured to draw it, till he placed his foot against the hilt; then the worm issued from it. But Kormak did not rightly handle the weapon, in consequence whereof good fortune deserted it. As he unsheathed Skofnung, it emitted a hollow murmur.' (*Bartholini de Causis Contemptæ a Danis adhuc Gentilibus Mortis, Libri Tres*, Hafniæ, 1689, 4to, p. 574.)

To the history of this sentient and prescient weapon I beg leave to add from memory the following legend, for which I cannot produce any better authority. A young nobleman of high hopes and fortune chanced to lose his way in the town which he inhabited, — the capital, if I mistake not, of a German province. He had accidentally involved himself among the narrow and winding streets of a suburb, inhabited by the lowest order of the people, and an approaching thunder-shower determined him to ask a short refuge in the most decent habitation that was near him. He knocked at the door, which was opened by a tall man, of a grisly and ferocious aspect and sordid dress. The stranger was readily ushered to a chamber, where swords, scourges, and machines which seemed to be implements of torture were suspended on the wall. One of these swords dropped from its scabbard as the nobleman, after a moment's hesitation, crossed the threshold. His host immediately stared at him with such a marked expression that the young man could not help demanding his name and business and the meaning of his looking at him so fixedly. 'I am,' answered the man, 'the public executioner of this city; and the incident you have observed is a sure augury that I shall, in discharge of my duty, one day cut off your head with the weapon which has just now spontaneously unsheathed itself.' The nobleman lost no time in leaving his place of refuge, but, engaging in some of the plots of the period, was shortly after decapitated by that very man and instrument.

Lord Lovat is said, by the author of the *Letters from Scotland*, to have affirmed that a number of swords that hung up in the hall of the mansion-house leaped of themselves out of the scabbard at the instant he was born. The story passed current among his clan, but, like that of the story I have just quoted, proved an unfortunate omen. (*Letters from Scotland*, II, 214.)

NOTE 21, p. 56

The connoisseurs in pipe-music affect to discover in a well composed pibroch the imitative sounds of march, conflict,

flight, pursuit, and all the 'current of a heady fight.' To this opinion Dr. Beattie has given his suffrage in the following elegant passage: —

'A pibroch is a species of tune, peculiar, I think, to the Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland. It is performed on a bagpipe, and differs totally from all other music. Its rhythm is so irregular, and its notes, especially in the quick movement, so mixed and huddled together, that a stranger finds it impossible to reconcile his ear to it, so as to perceive its modulation. Some of these pibrochs, being intended to represent a battle, begin with a grave motion, resembling a march; then gradually quicken into the onset; run off with noisy confusion, and turbulent rapidity, to imitate the conflict and pursuit; then swell into a few flourishes of triumphant joy; and perhaps close with the wild and slow wailings of a funeral procession.' (*Essay on Laughter and Ludicrous Composition*, chap. III, note.)

NOTE 22, p. 58

Besides his ordinary name and surname, which were chiefly used in the intercourse with the Lowlands, every Highland chief had an epithet expressive of his patriarchal dignity as head of the clan, and which was common to all his predecessors and successors, as Pharaoh to the kings of Egypt, or Arsaces to those of Parthia. This name was usually a patronymic, expressive of his descent from the founder of the family. Thus the Duke of Argyle is called MacCallum More, or the son of Colin the Great. Sometimes, however, it is derived from armorial distinctions, or the memory of some great feat; thus Lord Seaforth, as chief of the Mackenzies, or Clan-Kennet, bears the epithet of Caberfae, or Buck's Head, as representative of Colin Fitzgerald, founder of the family, who saved the Scottish king when endangered by a stag. But besides this title which belonged to his office and dignity, the chieftain had usually another peculiar to himself, which distinguished him from the chieftains of the same race. This was sometimes derived from complexion, as

dhu or *roy;* sometimes from size, as *beg* or *more;* at other times, from some peculiar exploit, or from some peculiarity of habit or appearance. The line of the text therefore signifies, 'Black Roderick, the descendant of Alpine.'

The song itself is intended as an imitation of the *jorrams*, or boat songs, of the Highlanders, which were usually composed in honour of a favourite chief. They are so adapted as to keep time with the sweep of the oars, and it is easy to distinguish between those intended to be sung to the oars of a galley, where the stroke is lengthened and doubled, as it were, and those which were timed to the rowers of an ordinary boat.

Note 23, p. 59

The Lennox, as the district is called which encircles the lower extremity of Loch Lomond, was peculiarly exposed to the incursions of the mountaineers who inhabited the inaccessible fastnesses at the upper end of the lake and the neighbouring district of Loch Katrine. These were often marked by circumstances of great ferocity, of which the noted conflict of Glen-fruin is a celebrated instance. This was a clan battle in which the Macgregors, headed by Allaster Macgregor, chief of the clan, encountered the sept of Colquhouns, commanded by Sir Humphry Colquhoun of Luss. It is on all hands allowed that the action was desperately fought and that the Colquhouns were defeated with slaughter, leaving two hundred of their name dead upon the field. But popular tradition has added other horrors to the tale. It is said that Sir Humphry Colquhoun, who was on horseback, escaped to the castle of Benechra, or Banochar, and was next day dragged out and murdered by the victorious Macgregors in cold blood. Buchanan of Auchmar, however, speaks of his slaughter as a subsequent event, and as perpetrated by the Macfarlanes. Again, it is reported that the Macgregors murdered a number of youths whom report of the intended battle had brought to be spectators, and whom the Colquhouns, anxious for their safety, had shut up in a barn to be out of dan-

ger. One account of the Macgregors denies this circumstance entirely; another ascribes it to the savage and bloodthirsty disposition of a single individual, the bastard brother of the Laird of Macgregor, who amused himself with this second massacre of the innocents in express disobedience to the chief, by whom he was left their guardian during the pursuit of the Colquhouns. It is added that Macgregor bitterly lamented this atrocious action, and prophesied the ruin which it must bring upon their ancient clan. The following account of the conflict, which is indeed drawn up by a friend of the Clan Gregor, is altogether silent on the murder of the youths.

'In the spring of the year 1602, there happened great dissensions and troubles between the laird of Luss, chief of the Colquhouns, and Alexander, laird of Macgregor. The original of these quarrels proceeded from injuries and provocations mutually given and received, not long before. Macgregor, however, wanting to have them ended in friendly conferences, marched at the head of two hundred of his clan to Leven, which borders on Luss, his country, with a view of settling matters by the mediation of friends: but Luss had no such intentions, and projected his measures with a different view; for he privately drew together a body of 300 horse and 500 foot, composed partly of his own clan and their followers, and partly of the Buchanans, his neighbours, and resolved to cut off Macgregor and his party to a man, in case the issue of the conference did not answer his inclination. But matters fell otherwise than he expected; and though Macgregor had previous information of his insidious design, yet, dissembling his resentment, he kept the appointment, and parted good friends in appearance.

'No sooner was he gone, than Luss, thinking to surprise him and his party in full security, and without any dread or apprehension of his treachery, followed with all speed, and came up with him at a place called Glenfroon. Macgregor, upon the alarm, divided his men into two parties, the greatest part whereof he commanded himself, and the other he committed to the care of his brother John, who, by his orders, led them

about another way, and attacked the Colquhouns in flank. Here it was fought with great bravery on both sides for a considerable time; and, notwithstanding the vast disproportion of numbers, Macgregor, in the end, obtained an absolute victory. So great was the rout, that 200 of the Colquhouns were left dead upon the spot, most of the leading men were killed, and a multitude of prisoners taken. But what seemed most surprising and incredible in this defeat, was, that none of the Macgregors were missing, except John, the laird's brother, and one common fellow, though indeed many of them were wounded.' (Professor Ross's *History of the Family of Sutherland*, 1631.)

The consequences of the battle of Glen-fruin were very calamitous to the family of Macgregor, who had already been considered as an unruly clan. The widows of the slain Colquhouns, sixty, it is said, in number, appeared in doleful procession before the king at Stirling, each riding upon a white palfrey, and bearing in her hand the bloody shirt of her husband displayed upon a pike. James VI was so much moved by the complaints of this 'choir of mourning dames,' that he let loose his vengeance against the Macgregors, without either bounds or moderation. The very name of the clan was proscribed, and those by whom it had been borne were given up to sword and fire and absolutely hunted down by bloodhounds like wild beasts. Argyle and the Campbells, on the one hand, Montrose, with the Grahames and Buchanans, on the other, are said to have been the chief instruments in suppressing this devoted clan. The Laird of Macgregor surrendered to the former on condition that he would take him out of Scottish ground. But, to use Birrel's expression, he kept 'a Highlandman's promise;' and although he fulfilled his word to the letter by carrying him as far as Berwick, he afterwards brought him back to Edinburgh, where he was executed with eighteen of his clan. (Birrel's *Diary*, October 2, 1603.) The Clan Gregor, being thus driven to utter despair, seem to have renounced the laws from the benefit of which they were excluded, and their depredations produced new acts of council, confirming the severity of their proscription, which had only the effect of

rendering them still more united and desperate. It is a most extraordinary proof of the ardent and invincible spirit of clanship, that notwithstanding the repeated proscriptions providently ordained by the legislature 'for the *timeous preventing* the disorders and oppression that may fall out by the said name and clan of Macgregors, and their followers,' they were in 1715 and 1745 a potent clan, and continue to subsist as a distinct and numerous race.

NOTE 24, p. 66

In 1529 James V made a convention at Edinburgh, for the purpose of considering the best mode of quelling the Border robbers, who, during the license of his minority and the troubles which followed, had committed many exorbitances. Accordingly he assembled a flying army of ten thousand men, consisting of his principal nobility and their followers, who were directed to bring their hawks and dogs with them, that the monarch might refresh himself with sport during the intervals of military execution. With this array he swept through Ettrick Forest, where he hanged, over the gate of his own castle, Piers Cockburn of Henderland, who had prepared, according to tradition, a feast for his reception. He caused Adam Scott of Tushielaw also to be executed, who was distinguished by the title of King of the Border. But the most noted victim of justice during that expedition was John Armstrong of Gilnockie, famous in Scottish song, who, confiding in his own supposed innocence, met the king, with a retinue of thirty-six persons, all of whom were hanged at Carlenrig, near the source of the Teviot. The effect of this severity was such that, as the vulgar expressed it, 'the rush-bush kept the cow,' and, 'thereafter was great peace and rest a long time, wherethrough the King had great profit; for he had ten thousand sheep going in the Ettrick Forest in keeping by Andrew Bell, who made the King as good count of them as they had gone in the bounds of Fife.' (Pitscottie's *History*, p. 153.)

Note 25, p. 67

James was, in fact, equally attentive to restrain rapine and feudal oppression in every part of his dominions.

'The king past to the Isles, and there held justice courts, and punished both thief and traitor according to their demerit. And also he caused great men to show their holdings, wherethrough he found many of the said lands in non-entry; the which he confiscate and brought home to his own use, and afterward annexed them to the crown, as ye shall hear. Syne brought many of the great men of the isles captive with him, such as Mudyart, M'Connel, M'Loyd of the Lewes, M'Neil, M'Lane, M'Intosh, John Mudyart, M'Kay, M'Kenzie, with many other that I cannot rehearse at this time. Some of them he put in ward and some in court, and some he took pledges for good rule in time coming. So he brought the isles both north and south, in good rule, and peace; wherefore he had great profit, service, and obedience of people a long time thereafter; and as long as he had the heads of the country in subjection, they lived in great peace and rest, and there was great riches and policy by the king's justice.' (Pitscottie, p. 152.)

Note 26, p. 73

The author has to apologise for the inadvertent appropriation of a whole line from the tragedy of Douglas, —

> I hold the first who strikes, my foe.

(Note to the Second Edition.)

Note 27, p. 74

Hardihood was in every respect so essential to the character of a Highlander that the reproach of effeminacy was the most bitter which could be thrown upon him. Yet it was sometimes hazarded on what we might presume to think slight grounds. It is reported of old Sir Ewen Cameron of Lochiel, when upwards

of seventy, that he was surprised by night on a hunting or military expedition. He wrapped him in his plaid and lay contentedly down upon the snow, with which the ground happened to be covered. Among his attendants, who were preparing to take their rest in the same manner, he observed that one of his grandsons, for his better accommodation, had rolled a large snow-ball, and placed it below his head. The wrath of the ancient chief was awakened by a symptom of what he conceived to be degenerate luxury. 'Out upon thee,' said he, kicking the frozen bolster from the head which it supported, 'art thou so effeminate as to need a pillow?' The officer of engineers, whose curious letters from the Highlands have been more than once quoted, tells a similar story of Macdonald of Keppoch, and subjoins the following remarks: —

'This and many other stories are romantick; but there is one thing, that at first thought might seem very romantick, of which I have been credibly assured, that when the Highlanders are constrained to lie among the hills, in cold dry windy weather, they sometimes soak the plaid in some river or burn, (i.e., brook,) and then, holding up a corner of it a little above their heads, they turn themselves round and round, till they are enveloped by the whole mantle. They then lay themselves down on the heath, upon the leeward side of some hill, where the wet and the warmth of their bodies make a steam, like that of a boiling kettle. The wet, they say, keeps them warm by thickening the stuff, and keeping the wind from penetrating. I must confess I should have been apt to question this fact, had I not frequently seen them wet from morning to night, and, even at the beginning of the rain, not so much as stir a few yards to shelter, but continue in it without necessity, till they were, as we say, wet through and through. And that is soon effected by the looseness and spunginess of the plaiding; but the bonnet is frequently taken off, and wrung like a dish-clout, and then put on again. They have been accustomed from their infancy to be often wet, and to take the water like spaniels, and this is become a second nature, and can scarcely be called a hardship to them, insomuch

that I used to say, they seemed to be of the duck kind, and to love water as well. Though I never saw this preparation for sleep in windy weather, yet, setting out early in a morning from one of the huts, I have seen the marks of their lodging, where the ground has been free from rime or snow, which remained all round the spot where they had lain.' (*Letters from Scotland*, London, 1754, 8vo, II, 108.)

NOTE 28, p. 74

'This officer is a sort of secretary, and is to be ready, upon all occasions, to venture his life in defence of his master; and at drinking-bouts he stands behind his seat, at his haunch, from whence his title is derived, and watches the conversation, to see if any one offends his patron. An English officer being in company with a certain chieftain, and several other Highland gentlemen, near Killichumen, had an argument with the *great man;* and both being well warmed with usky, at last the dispute grew very hot. A youth who was henchman, not understanding one word of English, imagined his chief was insulted, and thereupon drew his pistol from his side, and snapped it at the officer's head: but the pistol missed fire, otherwise it is more than probable he might have suffered death from the hand of that little vermin. But it is very disagreeable to an Englishman over a bottle, with the Highlanders, to see every one of them have his gilly, that is, his servant, standing behind him all the while, let what will be the subject of conversation.' (*Letters from Scotland*, II, 159.)

NOTE 29, p. 78

When a chieftain designed to summon his clan upon any sudden or important emergency, he slew a goat, and making a cross of any light wood, seared its extremities in the fire, and extinguished them in the blood of the animal. This was called the Fiery Cross, also Crean Tarigh, or the Cross of Shame, because disobedience to what the symbol implied inferred infamy. It

was delivered to a swift and trusty messenger, who ran full speed with it to the next hamlet, where he presented it to the principal person, with a single word, implying the place of rendezvous. He who received the symbol was bound to send it forward with equal despatch to the next village; and thus it passed with incredible celerity through all the district which owed allegiance to the chief, and also among his allies and neighbours if the danger was common to them. At sight of the Fiery Cross every man from sixteen years old to sixty, capable of bearing arms, was obliged instantly to repair in his best arms and accoutrements to the place of rendezvous. He who failed to appear suffered the extremities of fire and sword, which were emblematically denounced to the disobedient by the bloody and burnt marks upon this warlike signal. During the civil war of 1745–46 the Fiery Cross often made its circuit; and upon one occasion it passed through the whole district of Breadalbane, a tract of thirty-two miles, in three hours. The late Alexander Stewart, Esq., of Invernahyle described to me his having sent round the Fiery Cross through the district of Appine during the same commotion. The coast was threatened by a descent from two English frigates, and the flower of the young men were with the army of Prince Charles Edward, then in England; yet the summons was so effectual that even old age and childhood obeyed it; and a force was collected in a few hours, so numerous and so enthusiastic that all attempt at the intended diversion upon the country of the absent warriors was in prudence abandoned as desperate.

This practice, like some others, is common to the Highlanders with the ancient Scandinavians, as will appear by the following extract from Olaus Magnus: —

'When the enemy is upon the sea-coast, or within the limits of northern kingdomes, then presently, by the command of the principal governours, with the counsel and consent of the old soldiers, who are notably skilled in such like business, a staff of three hands length, in the common sight of them all, is carried, by the speedy running of some active young man, unto that

village or city, with this command, — that on the 3. 4. or 8. day, one, two, or three, or else every man in particular, from 15 years old, shall come with his arms, and expenses for ten or twenty days, upon pain that his or their houses shall be burnt, (which is intimated by the burning of the staff,) or else the master to be hanged, (which is signified by the cord tied to it,) to appear speedily on such a bank, or field, or valley, to hear the cause he is called, and to hear orders from the said provincial governours what he shall do. Wherefore that messenger, swifter than any post or waggon, having done his commission, comes slowly back again, bringing a token with him that he hath done all legally; and every moment one or another runs to every village, and tells those places what they must do. . . . The messengers, therefore, of the footmen, that are to give warning to the people to meet for the battail, run fiercely and swiftly; for no snow, no rain, nor heat can stop them, nor night hold them; but they will soon run the race they undertake. The first messenger tells it to the next village, and that to the next; and so the hubbub runs all over till they all know it in that stift or territory, where, when, and wherefore they must meet.' (Olaus Magnus's *History of the Goths*, Englished by J. S., London, 1658, book IV, chaps. 3, 4.)

NOTE 30, p. 81

The state of religion in the Middle Ages afforded considerable facilities for those whose mode of life excluded them from regular worship, to secure, nevertheless, the ghostly assistance of confessors, perfectly willing to adapt the nature of their doctrine to the necessities and peculiar circumstances of their flock. Robin Hood, it is well known, had his celebrated domestic chaplain, Friar Tuck. And that same curtal friar was probably matched in manners and appearance by the ghostly fathers of the Tynedale robbers, who are thus described in an excommunication fulminated against their patrons by Richard Fox, Bishop of Durham, tempore Henrici VIII.

'We have further understood, that there are many chaplains

in the said territories of Tynedale and Redesdale, who are public and open maintainers of concubinage, irregular, suspended, excommunicated, and interdicted persons, and withal so utterly ignorant of letters, that it has been found by those who objected this to them, that there were some who, having celebrated mass for ten years, were still unable to read the sacramental service. We have also understood there are persons among them who, although not ordained, do take upon them the offices of priesthood; and, in contempt of God, celebrate the divine and sacred rites, and administer the sacraments, not only in sacred and dedicated places, but in those which are prophane and interdicted, and most wretchedly ruinous; they themselves being attired in ragged, torn, and most filthy vestments, altogether unfit to be used in divine, or even in temporal offices. The which said chaplains do administer sacraments and sacramental rites to the aforesaid manifest and infamous thieves, robbers, depredators, receivers of stolen goods, and plunderers, and that without restitution, or intention to restore, as evinced by the act; and do also openly admit them to the rites of ecclesiastical sepulchre, without exacting security for restitution, although they are prohibited from doing so by the sacred canons, as well as by the institutes of the saints and fathers. All which infers the heavy peril of their own souls, and is a pernicious example to the other believers in Christ, as well as no slight, but an aggravated injury, to the numbers despoiled and plundered of their goods, gear, herds, and chattels.' [1]

To this lively and picturesque description of the confessors and churchmen of predatory tribes there may be added some curious particulars respecting the priests attached to the several septs of native Irish during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. These friars had indeed to plead that the incursions, which they not only pardoned but even encouraged, were made upon those hostile to them, as well in religion as from national antipathy; but by Protestant writers they are uniformly alleged to be the

[1] *The Monition against the Robbers of Tynedale and Redesdale*, with which I was favoured by my friend Mr. Surtees, of Mainsforth, may be found in the original Latin in the Appendix to the Introduction to the *Border Minstrelsy*.

chief instruments of Irish insurrection, the very well-spring of all rebellion towards the English government. Lithgow, the Scottish traveller, declares the Irish wood-kerne, or predatory tribes, to be but the hounds of their hunting priests, who directed their incursions by their pleasure, partly for sustenance, partly to gratify animosity, partly to foment general division, and always for the better security and easier domination of the friars.[1] Derrick, the liveliness and minuteness of whose descriptions may frequently apologise for his doggerel verses, after describing an Irish feast and the encouragement given, by the songs of the bards, to its termination in an incursion upon the parts of the country more immediately under the dominion of the English, records the no less powerful arguments used by the friar to excite their animosity: —

> And more t'augment the flame,
> and rancour of their harte,
> The frier, of his counsells vile,
> to rebelles doth imparte,
> Affirming that it is
> an almose deede to God,
> To make the English subjectes taste
> the Irish rebells' rodde.
> To spoile, to kill, to burne,
> this frier's counsell is;
> And for the doing of the same,
> he warrantes heavenlie blisse.
> He tells a holie tale;
> the white he tournes to blacke;
> And through the pardons in his male,
> he workes a knavishe knacke.

The wreckful invasion of a part of the English pale is then described with some spirit; the burning of houses, driving off cattle, and all pertaining to such predatory inroads, are illustrated by a rude cut. The defeat of the Irish by a party of English soldiers from the next garrison is then commemorated, and in like manner adorned with an engraving, in which the friar is exhibited mourning over the slain chieftain; or, as the rubric expresses it,

> The frier then, that treacherous knave, with ough ough-hone lament,
> To see his cousin Devill's-son to have so foul event.

[1] Lithgow's *Travels*, first ed., p. 431.

The matter is handled at great length in the text, of which the following verses are more than sufficient sample: —

The frier seyng this,
lamentes that luckless parte,
And curseth to the pitte of hell
the death man's sturdie harte:
Yet for to quight them with
the frier taketh paine,
For all the synnes that ere he did
remission to obtaine.
And therefore serves his booke,
the candell and the bell;
But thinke you that such apishe toies
bring damned souls from hell?
It 'longs not to my parte
infernall things to knowe;
But I beleve till later daie,
thei rise not from belowe.
Yet hope that friers give
to this rebellious rout,
If that their souls should chaunce in hell,
to bringe them quicklie out,
Doeth make them lead suche lives,
as neither God nor man,
Without revenge for their desartes,
permitte or suffer can.
Thus friers are the cause,
the fountain, and the spring,
Of hurleburles in this lande,
of eche unhappie thing.
Thei cause them to rebell
against their soveraigne quene,
And through rebellion often tymes,
their lives doe vanishe clene.
So as by friers meanes,
in whom all follie swimme,
The Irishe karne doe often lose
the life, with hedde and limme.[1]

As the Irish tribes and those of the Scottish Highlands are much more intimately allied by language, manners, dress, and customs than the antiquaries of either country have been willing to admit, I flatter myself I have here produced a strong warrant for the character sketched in the text. The following picture, though of a different kind, serves to establish the existence of

[1] This curious picture of Ireland was inserted by the author in the republication of Somers's *Tracts*, I, in which the plates have been also inserted, from the only impressions known to exist, belonging to the copy in the Advocates' Library. See Somers's *Tracts*, I, pp. 591, 594.

ascetic religionists to a comparatively late period in the Highlands and Western Isles. There is a great deal of simplicity in the description, for which, as for much similar information, I am obliged to Dr. John Martin, who visited the Hebrides at the suggestion of Sir Robert Sibbald, a Scottish antiquarian of eminence, and early in the eighteenth century published a description of them which procured him admission into the Royal Society. He died in London about 1719. His work is a strange mixture of learning, observation, and gross credulity.

'I remember,' says this author, 'I have seen an old lay-capuchin here, (in the island of Benbecula,) called in their language Brahir-bocht, that is, Poor Brother; which is literally true; for he answers this character, having nothing but what is given him: he holds himself fully satisfied with food and rayment, and lives in as great simplicity as any of his order; his diet is very mean, and he drinks only fair water; his habit is no less mortifying than that of his brethren elsewhere: he wears a short coat, which comes no farther than his middle, with narrow sleeves like a waistcoat: he wears a plad above it, girt about the middle, which reaches to his knee: the plad is fastened on his breast with a wooden pin, his neck bare, and his feet often so too; he wears a hat for ornament, and the string about it is a bit of a fisher's line, made of horse-hair. This plad he wears instead of a gown worn by those of his order in other countries. I told him he wanted the flaxen girdle that men of his order usually wear: he answered me, that he wore a leathern one, which was the same thing. Upon the matter, if he is spoke to when at meat, he answers again; which is contrary to the custom of his order. This poor man frequently diverts himself with angling of trouts; he lies upon straw, and has no bell (as others have) to call him to his devotions, but only his conscience, as he told me.' (Martin's *Description of the Western Highlands*, p. 82.)

Note 31, p. 81

The legend which follows is not of the author's invention. It is possible he may differ from modern critics in supposing that

the records of human superstition, if peculiar to and characteristic of the country in which the scene is laid, are a legitimate subject of poetry. He gives, however, a ready assent to the narrower proposition which condemns all attempts of an irregular and disordered fancy to excite terror by accumulating a train of fantastic and incoherent horrors, whether borrowed from all countries and patched upon a narrative belonging to one which knew them not or derived from the author's own imagination. In the present case, therefore, I appeal to the record which I have transcribed, with the variation of a very few words, from the geographical collections made by the Laird of Macfarlane. I know not whether it be necessary to remark that the miscellaneous concourse of youths and maidens on the night and on the spot where the miracle is said to have taken place, might, even in a credulous age, have somewhat diminished the wonder which accompanied the conception of Gilli-Doir-Magrevollich.

'There is bot two myles from Inverloghie, the church of Kilmalee, in Loghyeld. In ancient tymes there was ane church builded upon ane hill, which was above this church, which doeth now stand in this toune; and ancient men doeth say, that there was a battell foughten on ane litle hill not the tenth part of a myle from this church, be certaine men which they did not know what they were. And long tyme thereafter, certaine herds of that toune, and of the next toune, called Unnatt, both wenches and youthes, did on a tyme conveen with others on that hill; and the day being somewhat cold, did gather the bones of the dead men that were slayne long tyme before in that place, and did make a fire to warm them. At last they did all remove from the fire, except one maid or wench, which was verie cold, and she did remaine there for a space. She being quyetlie her alone, without anie other companie, took up her cloaths above her knees, or thereby, to warm her; a wind did come and caste the ashes upon her, and she was conceived of ane man-chyld. Severall tymes thereafter she was verie sick, and at last she was knowne to be with chyld. And then her parents did ask at her the matter heiroff, which the wench could not weel answer

which way to satisfie them. At last she resolved them with ane answer. As fortune fell upon her concerning this marvellous miracle, the chyld being borne, his name was called Gili-doir Maghrevollich, that is to say, the Black Child, Son to the Bones. So called, his grandfather sent him to schooll, and so he was a good schollar, and godlie. He did build this church which doeth now stand in Lochyeld, called Kilmalie.' (Macfarlane, *ut supra*, II, 188.)

NOTE 32, p. 82

The snood or riband with which a Scottish lass braided her hair had an emblematical signification, and applied to her maiden character. It was exchanged for the *curch*, *toy*, or coif when she passed by marriage into the matron state. But if the damsel was so unfortunate as to lose pretensions to the name of maiden without gaining a right to that of matron, she was neither permitted to use the snood nor advanced to the graver dignity of the curch. In old Scottish songs there occur many sly allusions to such misfortune, as in the old words to the popular tune of 'Ower the muir amang the heather.'

Down amang the broom, the broom,
Down amang the broom, my dearie,
The lassie lost her silken snood,
That gard her greet till she was wearie.

NOTE 33, p. 84

In adopting the legend concerning the birth of the Founder of the Church of Kilmalie the author has endeavoured to trace the effects which such a belief was likely to produce in a barbarous age on the person to whom it related. It seems likely that he must have become a fanatic or an impostor, or that mixture of both which forms a more frequent character than either of them, as existing separately. In truth, mad persons are frequently more anxious to impress upon others a faith in their visions than they are themselves confirmed in their reality; as, on the other hand, it is difficult for the most cool-headed impostor long to personate an enthusiast without in some degree believing what

he is so eager to have believed. It was a natural attribute of such a character as the supposed hermit that he should credit the numerous superstitions with which the minds of ordinary Highlanders are almost always imbued. A few of these are slightly alluded to in this stanza. The River Demon, or River-horse, — for it is that form which he commonly assumes, — is the Kelpy of the Lowlands, an evil and malicious spirit, delighting to forebode and to witness calamity. He frequents most Highland lakes and rivers; and one of his most memorable exploits was performed upon the banks of Loch Vennachar, in the very district which forms the scene of our action: it consisted in the destruction of a funeral procession, with all its attendants. The 'noontide hag,' called in Gaelic Glas-lich, a tall, emaciated, gigantic female figure, is supposed in particular to haunt the district of Knoidart. A goblin dressed in antique armour, and having one hand covered with blood, called from that circumstance Lham-dearg, or Red-hand, is a tenant of the forests of Glenmore and Rothiemurcus. Other spirits of the desert, all frightful in shape and malignant in disposition, are believed to frequent different mountains and glens of the Highlands, where any unusual appearance produced by mist, or the strange lights that are sometimes thrown upon particular objects, never fails to present an apparition to the imagination of the solitary and melancholy mountaineer.

Note 34, p. 85

Most great families in the Highlands were supposed to have a tutelar, or, rather, a domestic spirit attached to them, who took an interest in their prosperity, and intimated by its wailings any approaching disaster. That of Grant of Grant was called May Moullach, and appeared in the form of a girl who had her arm covered with hair. Grant of Rothiemurcus had an attendant called Bodach-an-dun, or the Ghost of the Hill; and many other examples might be mentioned. The Ban-Schie implies a female fairy whose lamentations were often supposed to precede the

death of a chieftain of particular families. When she is visible, it is in the form of an old woman with a blue mantle and streaming hair. A superstition of the same kind is, I believe, universally received by the inferior ranks of the native Irish.

The death of the head of a Highland family is also sometimes supposed to be announced by a chain of lights of different colours, called Dr'eug, or death of the Druid. The direction which it takes marks the place of the funeral.

NOTE 35, p. 85

A presage of the kind alluded to in the text is still believed to announce death to the ancient Highland family of M'Lean of Lochbuy. The spirit of an ancestor slain in battle is heard to gallop along a stony bank, and then to ride thrice around the family residence, ringing his fairy bridle, and thus intimating the approaching calamity. How easily the eye as well as the ear may be deceived upon such occasions, is evident from the stories of armies in the air, and other spectral phenomena with which history abounds. Such an apparition is said to have been witnessed upon the side of Southfell mountain, between Penrith and Keswick, upon June 23, 1744, by two persons, William Lancaster of Blakehills and Daniel Stricket his servant, whose attestation to the fact, with a full account of the apparition, dated July 21, 1745, is printed in Clarke's *Survey of the Lakes*. The apparition consisted of several troops of horse moving in regular order with a steady, rapid motion, making a curved sweep around the fell, and seeming to the spectators to disappear over the ridge of the mountain. Many persons witnessed this phenomenon, and observed the last, or last but one, of the supposed troop occasionally leave his rank and pass at a gallop to the front, when he resumed the same steady pace. This curious appearance, making the necessary allowance for imagination, may be perhaps sufficiently accounted for by optical deception. (*Survey of the Lakes*, p. 25.)

Supernatural intimations of approaching fate are not, I

believe, confined to Highland families. Howel mentions having seen at a lapidary's, in 1632, a monumental stone prepared for four persons of the name of Oxenham, before the death of each of whom the inscription stated a white bird to have appeared and fluttered around the bed, while the patient was in the last agony. (*Familiar Letters*, ed. 1726, p. 247.) Glanville mentions one family the members of which received this solemn sign by music, the sound of which floated from the family residence and seemed to die in a neighbouring wood; another, that of Captain Wood of Bampton, to whom the signal was given by knocking. But the most remarkable instance of the kind occurs in the MS. Memoirs of Lady Fanshaw, so exemplary for her conjugal affection. Her husband, Sir Richard, and she chanced during their abode in Ireland to visit a friend, the head of a sept, who resided in his ancient baronial castle, surrounded with a moat. At midnight she was awakened by a ghastly and supernatural scream, and looking out of bed, beheld by the moonlight, a female face and part of the form hovering at the window. The distance from the ground as well as the circumstance of the moat excluded the possibility that what she beheld was of this world. The face was that of a young and rather handsome woman, but pale; and the hair, which was reddish, was loose and dishevelled. The dress, which Lady Fanshaw's terror did not prevent her remarking accurately, was that of the ancient Irish. This apparition continued to exhibit itself for some time, and then vanished with two shrieks, similar to that which had first excited Lady Fanshaw's attention. In the morning, with infinite terror, she communicated to her host what she had witnessed, and found him prepared not only to credit but to account for the apparition. 'A near relation of my family,' said he, 'expired last night in this castle. We disguised our certain expectation of the event from you lest it should throw a cloud over the cheerful reception which was due you. Now, before such an event happens in this family and castle, the female spectre whom you have seen always is visible. She is believed to be the spirit of a woman of inferior rank whom one of my ancestors degraded himself by

marrying, and whom afterwards, to expiate the dishonour done his family, he caused to be drowned in the castle moat.'

Note 36, p. 85

Inch-Cailliach, the Isle of Nuns, or of Old Women, is a most beautiful island at the lower extremity of Loch Lomond. The church belonging to the former nunnery was long used as the place of worship for the parish of Buchanan, but scarce any vestiges of it now remain. The burial-ground continues to be used, and contains the family places of sepulture of several neighbouring clans. The monuments of the Lairds of Macgregor, and of other families claiming a descent from the old Scottish King Alpine, are most remarkable. The Highlanders are as zealous of their rights of sepulture, as may be expected from a people whose whole laws and government, if clanship can be called so, turned upon the single principle of family descent. 'May his ashes be scattered on the water,' was one of the deepest and most solemn imprecations which they used against an enemy.

Note 37, p. 90

The present brogue of the Highlanders is made of half-dried leather, with holes to admit and let out the water; for walking the moors dry-shod is a matter altogether out of question. The ancient buskin was still ruder, being made of undressed deer's hide, with the hair outwards; a circumstance which procured the Highlanders the well-known epithet of 'Red-shanks.' The process is very accurately described by one Elder (himself a Highlander) in the project for a union between England and Scotland addressed to Henry VIII. 'We go a-hunting, and after that we have slain red-deer, we flay off the skin by-and-by, and setting of our bare-foot on the inside thereof, for want of cunning shoemakers, by your grace's pardon, we play the cobblers, compassing and measuring so much thereof as shall reach up to our ankles, pricking the upper part thereof with holes, that the water may repass where it enters, and stretching it up with a strong

thong of the same above our said ankles. So, and please your noble grace, we make our shoes. Therefore, we using such manner of shoes, the rough hairy side outwards, in your grace's dominions of England, we be called Roughfooted Scots.' (Pinkerton's *History*, II, 397.)

NOTE 38, p. 93

The coronach of the Highlanders, like the ululatus of the Romans, and the ululoo of the Irish, was a wild expression of lamentation, poured forth by the mourners over the body of a departed friend. When the words of it were articulate, they expressed the praises of the deceased and the loss the clan would sustain by his death. The following is a lamentation of this kind literally translated from the Gaelic, to some of the ideas of which the text stands indebted. The tune is so popular that it has since become the war-march or 'Gathering of the Clan.'

Coronach on Sir Lauchlan, Chief of Maclean

Which of all the Senachies
Can trace thy line from the root, up to Paradise,
But Macvuirih, the son of Fergus?
No sooner had thine ancient stately tree
Taken firm root in Albion,
Than one of thy forefathers fell at Harlaw. —
'T was then we lost a chief of deathless name.

'T is no base weed — no planted tree,
Nor a seedling of last Autumn;
Nor a sapling planted at Beltain;[1]
Wide, wide around were spread its lofty branches —
But the topmost bough is lowly laid!
Thou hast forsaken us before Sawaine.[2]

Thy dwelling is the winter house; —
Loud, sad, sad, and mighty is thy death-song!
Oh! courteous champion of Montrose!
Oh! stately warrior of the Celtic Isles!
Thou shalt buckle thy harness on no more!

The coronach has for some years past been superseded at funerals by the use of the bagpipe; and that also is, like many other Highland peculiarities, falling into disuse, unless in remote districts.

[1] Bell's fire, or Whitsunday. [2] Hallowe'en.

Note 39, p. 96

Inspection of the provincial map of Perthshire or any large map of Scotland will trace the progress of the signal through the small district of lakes and mountains, which in exercise of my poetical privilege I have subjected to the authority of my imaginary chieftain, and which at the period of my romance was really occupied by a clan who claimed a descent from Alpine, — a clan the most unfortunate and most persecuted, but neither the least distinguished, least powerful, nor least brave, of the tribes of the Gael.

Slioch non rioghridh duchaisach
Bha-shios an Dun-Staiobhinish
Aig an roubh crun na Halba othus
'Stag a cheil duchas fast ris.

The first stage of the Fiery Cross is to Duncraggan, a place near the Brigg of Turk, where a short stream divides Loch Achray from Loch Vennachar. From thence it passes towards Callender, and then, turning to the left up the pass of Leny, is consigned to Norman at the chapel of St. Bride, which stood on a small and romantic knoll in the middle of the valley, called Strath-Ire. Tombea and Arnandave, or Ardmandave, are names of places in the vicinity. The alarm is then supposed to pass along the lake of Lubnaig and through the various glens in the district of Balquidder, including the neighbouring tracts of Glenfinlas and Strathgartney.

Note 40, p. 101

It may be necessary to inform the southern reader that the heath on the Scottish moorlands is often set fire to, that the sheep may have the advantage of the young herbage produced, in room of the tough old heather plants. This custom (execrated by sportsmen) produces occasionally the most beautiful nocturnal appearances, similar almost to the discharge of a volcano. This simile is not new to poetry. The charge of a warrior, in the fine ballad of Hardyknute, is said to be 'like fire to heather set.'

NOTE 41, p. 102

The deep and implicit respect paid by the Highland clansmen to their chief rendered this both a common and a solemn oath. In other respects they were like most savage nations, capricious in their ideas concerning the obligatory power of oaths. One solemn mode of swearing was by kissing the dirk, imprecating upon themselves death by that, or a similar weapon, if they broke their vow. But for oaths in the usual form they are said to have had little respect. As for the reverence due to the chief, it may be guessed from the following odd example of a Highland point of honour: —

'The clan whereto the above-mentioned tribe belongs, is the only one I have heard of, which is without a chief; that is, being divided into families, under several chieftains, without any particular patriarch of the whole name. And this is a great reproach, as may appear from an affair that fell out at my table, in the Highlands, between one of that name and a Cameron. The provocation given by the latter was, "Name your chief." The return of it at once was, "You are a fool." They went out next morning, but having early notice of it, I sent a small party of soldiers after them, which, in all probability, prevented some barbarous mischief that might have ensued: for the chiefless Highlander, who is himself a petty chieftain, was going to the place appointed with a small-sword and pistol, whereas the Cameron (an old man) took with him only his broadsword, according to the agreement.

'When all was over, and I had, at least seemingly, reconciled them, I was told the words, of which I seemed to think but slightly, were, to one of the clan, the greatest of all provocations.' (*Letters from Scotland*, II, 221.)

NOTE 42, p. 103

This is a very steep and most romantic hollow in the mountain of Benvenue, overhanging the south-eastern extremity of

Loch Katrine. It is surrounded with stupendous rocks, and overshadowed with birch-trees, mingled with oaks, the spontaneous production of the mountain, even where its cliffs appear denuded of soil. A dale in so wild a situation, and amid a people whose genius bordered on the romantic, did not remain without appropriate deities. The name literally implies the Corri, or Den, of the Wild or Shaggy Men. Perhaps this, as conjectured by Mr. Alexander Campbell,[1] may have originally only implied its being the haunt of a ferocious banditti. But tradition has ascribed to the Urisk, who gives name to the cavern, a figure between a goat and a man; in short, however much the classical reader may be startled, precisely that of the Grecian Satyr. The Urisk seems not to have inherited, with the form, the petulance of the silvan deity of the classics: his occupation, on the contrary, resembled those of Milton's Lubbar Fiend, or of the Scottish Brownie, though he differed from both in name and appearance.

'The Urisks,' says Dr. Graham, 'were a sort of lubberly supernaturals, who, like the Brownies, could be gained over by kind attention to perform the drudgery of the farm, and it was believed that many of the families in the Highlands had one of the order attached to it. They were supposed to be dispersed over the Highlands, each in his own wild recess, but the solemn stated meetings of the order were regularly held in this Cave of Benvenue. This current superstition, no doubt, alludes to some circumstance in the ancient history of this country.' (*Scenery on the Southern Confines of Perthshire*, 1806, p. 19.) It must be owned that the coir or den does not, in its present state, meet our ideas of a subterraneous grotto or cave, being only a small and narrow cavity among huge fragments of rocks rudely piled together. But such a scene is liable to convulsions of nature which a Lowlander cannot estimate, and which may have choked up what was originally a cavern. At least the name and tradition warrant the author of a fictitious tale to assert its having been such at the remote period in which this scene is laid.

[1] *Journey from Edinburgh*, 1802, p. 109.

Note 43, p. 105

Bealach-nam-bo, or the Pass of Cattle, is a most magnificent glade, overhung with aged birch-trees, a little higher up the mountain than the Coir-nan-Uriskin, treated of in a former note. The whole composes the most sublime piece of scenery that imagination can conceive.

Note 44, p. 105

A Highland chief, being as absolute in his patriarchal authority as any prince, had a corresponding number of officers attached to his person. He had his body-guards, called Luichttach, picked from his clan for strength, activity, and entire devotion to his person. These, according to their deserts, were sure to share abundantly in the rude profusion of his hospitality. It is recorded, for example, by tradition that Allan MacLean, chief of that clan, happened upon a time to hear one of these favourite retainers observe to his comrade that their chief grew old. 'Whence do you infer that?' replied the other. 'When was it,' rejoined the first, 'that a soldier of Allan's was obliged, as I am now, not only to eat the flesh from the bone, but even to tear off the inner skin, or filament?' The hint was quite sufficient, and MacLean next morning, to relieve his followers from such dire necessity, undertook an inroad on the mainland, the ravage of which altogether effaced the memory of his former expeditions for the like purpose.

Our officer of engineers, so often quoted, has given us a distinct list of the domestic officers who, independent of Luichttach, or *gardes de corps*, belonged to the establishment of a Highland Chief. These are, 1. The Henchman. (See note, p. 369.) 2. The Bard. (See p. 353.) 3. Bladier, or spokesman. 4. Gillie-more, or sword-bearer, alluded to in the text. 5. Gillie-casflue, who carried the chief, if on foot, over the fords. 6. Gillie-comstraine, who leads the chief's horse. 7. Gillie-Trushanarinsh, the baggage man. 8. The piper. 9. The piper's gillie, or attendant,

who carries the bagpipe.[1] Although this appeared, naturally enough, very ridiculous to an English officer, who considered the master of such a retinue as no more than an English gentleman of £500 a year, yet in the circumstances of the chief, whose strength and importance consisted in the number and attachment of his followers, it was of the last consequence, in point of policy, to have in his gift subordinate offices which called immediately round his person those who were most devoted to him, and, being of value in their estimation, were also the means of rewarding them.

NOTE 45, p. 112

The Highlanders, like all rude people, had various superstitious modes of enquiring into futurity. One of the most noted was the Taghairm, mentioned in the text. A person was wrapped up in the skin of a newly slain bullock, and deposited beside a waterfall, or at the bottom of a precipice, or in some other strange, wild, and unusual situation, where the scenery around him suggested nothing but objects of horror. In this situation he revolved in his mind the question proposed; and whatever was impressed upon him by his exalted imagination passed for the inspiration of the disembodied spirits who haunt the desolate recesses. In some of these Hebrides they attributed the same oracular power to a large black stone by the seashore, which they approached with certain solemnities, and considered the first fancy which came into their own minds after they did so to be the undoubted dictate of the tutelar deity of the stone, and, as such, to be if possible punctually complied with. Martin has recorded the following curious modes of Highland augury, in which the Taghairm and its effects upon the person who was subjected to it may serve to illustrate the text.

'It was an ordinary thing among the over-curious to consult an invisible oracle, concerning the fate of families and battles, &c. This was performed three different ways: the first was by a

[1] *Letters from Scotland*, II, p. 15.

company of men, one of whom, being detached by lot, was afterwards carried to a river, which was the boundary between two villages; four of the company laid hold on him, and, having shut his eyes, they took him by the legs and arms, and then, tossing him to and again, struck his hips with force against the bank. One of them cried out, What is it you have got here? another answers, A log of birch-wood. The other cries again, Let his invisible friends appear from all quarters, and let them relieve him by giving an answer to our present demands: and in a few minutes after, a number of little creatures came from the sea, who answered the question, and disappeared suddenly. The man was then set at liberty, and they all returned home, to take their measures according to the prediction of their false prophets; but the poor deluded fools were abused, for their answer was still ambiguous. This was always practised in the night, and may literally be called the works of darkness.

'I had an account from the most intelligent and judicious men in the Isle of Skie, that about sixty-two years ago, the oracle was thus consulted only once, and that was in the parish of Kilmartin, on the east side, by a wicked and mischievous race of people, who are now extinguished, both root and branch.

'The second way of consulting the oracle was by a party of men, who first retired to solitary places, remote from any house, and there they singled out one of their number, and wrapt him in a big cow's hide, which they folded about him; his whole body was covered with it, except his head, and so left in this posture all night, until his invisible friends relieved him, by giving a proper answer to the question in hand; which he received, as he fancied, from several persons that he found about him all that time. His consorts returned to him at the break of day, and then he communicated his news to them; which often proved fatal to those concerned in such unwarrantable enquiries.

'There was a third way of consulting, which was a confirmation of the second above mentioned. The same company who put the man into the hide, took a live cat, and put him on a spit; one of the number was employed to turn the spit, and one of his

consorts enquired of him, What are you doing? he answered, I roast this cat, until his friends answer the question; which must be the same that was proposed by the man shut up in the hide. And afterwards, a very big cat [1] comes, attended by a number of lesser cats, desiring to relieve the cat turned upon the spit, and then answers the question. If this answer proved the same that was given to the man in the hide, then it was taken as a confirmation of the other, which, in this case, was believed infallible.

'Mr. Alexander Cooper, present minister of North-Vist, told me that one John Erach, in the Isle of Lewis, assured him, it was his fate to have been led by his curiosity with some who consulted this oracle, and that he was a night within the hide, as above mentioned; during which time he felt and heard such terrible things, that he could not express them; the impression it made on him was such as could never go off, and he said for a thousand worlds he would never again be concerned in the like performance, for this had disordered him to a high degree. He confessed it ingenuously, and with an air of great remorse, and seemed to be very penitent under a just sense of so great a crime: he declared this about five years since, and is still living in the Lewis for any thing I know.' (*Description of the Western Isles*, p. 110. See also Pennant's *Scottish Tour*, II, 361.)

Note 46, p. 113

I know not if it be worth observing that this passage is taken almost literally from the mouth of an old Highland cern, or ceteran, as they were called. He used to narrate the merry doings of the good old time when he was follower of Rob Roy MacGregor. This leader on one occasion thought proper to make a descent upon the lower part of the Loch Lomond district, and summoned all the heritors and farmers to meet at the Kirk of Drymen, to pay him blackmail, i.e., tribute for forbearance and protection. As this invitation was supported by a band of thirty or forty stout fellows, only one gentleman (an ancestor, if I mistake not, of the present Mr. Grahame of Gartmore), ventured to decline

[1] The reader may have met with the story of the *King of the Cats*, in Lord Littleton's *Letters*. It is well known in the Highlands as a nursery tale.

compliance. Rob Roy instantly swept his land of all he could drive away, and among the spoil was a bull of the old Scottish wild breed, whose ferocity occasioned great plague to the ceterans. 'But ere we had reached the Row of Dennan,' said the old man, 'a child might have scratched his ears.'[1] The circumstance is a minute one, but it paints the times when the poor beeve was compelled

> To hoof it o'er as many weary miles,
> With goading pikemen hollowing at his heels,
> As e'er the bravest antler of the woods.
>
> *Ethwald.*

NOTE 47, p. 113

There is a rock so named in the Forest of Glenfinlas, by which a tumultuary cataract takes its course. This wild place is said in former times to have afforded refuge to an outlaw, who was supplied with provisions by a woman, who lowered them down from the brink of the precipice above. His water he procured for himself by letting down a flagon tied to a string, into the black pool beneath the fall.

NOTE 48, p. 114

Quartered. — Every thing belonging to the chase was matter of solemnity among our ancestors; but nothing was more so than the mode of cutting up, or, as it was technically called, breaking, the slaughtered stag. The forester had his allotted portion; the hounds had a certain allowance; and, to make the division as general as possible, the very birds had their share also. 'There is a little gristle,' says Turberville, 'which is upon the spoone of the brisket, which we call the raven's bone; and I have seen in some places a raven so wont and accustomed to it, that she would never fail to croak and cry for it all the time you were in breaking up of the deer, and would not depart till she had it.' In the very ancient metrical romance of *Sir Tristrem* that peerless knight, who is said to have been the very deviser of all rules of chase, did not omit the ceremony: —

[1] This anecdote was, in former editions, inaccurately ascribed to Gregor Macgregor of Glengyle, called Ghlune Dhu, or Black-knee, a relation of Rob Roy, but, as I have been assured, not addicted to his predatory excesses. (Note to Third Edition.)

The rauen he yaue his yiftes
Sat on the fourched tre.

The raven might also challenge his rights by the Book of St. Albans; for thus says Dame Juliana Berners: —

Slitteth anon
The bely to the side, from the corbyn bone;
That is corbyn's fee, at the death he will be.

Jonson, in *The Sad Shepherd*, gives a more poetical account of the same ceremony.

Marian. He that undoes him,
Doth cleave the brisket bone, upon the spoon
Of which a little gristle grows — you call it —
Robin Hood. The raven's bone.
Marian. Now o'er head sat a raven
On a sere bough, a grown, great bird, and hoarse,
Who, all the while the deer was breaking up,
So croaked and cried for 't, as all the huntsmen,
Especially old Scathlock, thought it ominous.

Note 49, p. 115

Though this be in the text described as a response of the Taghairm, or Oracle of the Hide, it was of itself an augury frequently attended to. The fate of the battle was often anticipated in the imagination of the combatants by observing which party first shed blood. It is said that the Highlanders under Montrose were so deeply imbued with this notion that on the morning of the battle of Tippermoor they murdered a defenceless herdsman, whom they found in the fields, merely to secure an advantage of so much consequence to their party.

Note 50, p. 121

This little fairy tale is founded upon a very curious Danish ballad which occurs in the *Kæmpe Viser*, a collection of heroic songs first published in 1591, and reprinted in 1695, inscribed by Anders Sofrensen, the collector and editor, to Sophia Queen of Denmark. I have been favoured with a literal translation of the original by my learned friend Mr. Robert Jamieson, whose deep knowledge of Scandinavian antiquities will, I hope, one day be displayed in illustration of the history of Scottish Ballad and

Song, for which no man possesses more ample materials. The story will remind the readers of the *Border Minstrelsy* of the tale of Young Tamlane. But this is only a solitary and not very marked instance of coincidence, whereas several of the other ballads in the same collection find exact counterparts in the *Kæmpe Viser*. Which may have been the originals, will be a question for future antiquaries. Mr. Jamieson, to secure the power of literal translation, has adopted the old Scottish idiom, which approaches so near to that of the Danish as almost to give word for word, as well as line for line, and indeed in many verses the orthography alone is altered. As Wester Haf, mentioned in the first stanza of the ballad, means the West Sea, in opposition to the Baltic, or East Sea, Mr. Jamieson inclines to be of opinion that the scene of the disenchantment is laid in one of the Orkney or Hebride Islands. To each verse in the original is added a burden, having a kind of meaning of its own, but not applicable, — at least, not uniformly applicable, — to the sense of the stanza to which it is subjoined: this is very common both in Danish and Scottish song.

THE ELFIN GRAY

TRANSLATED FROM THE DANISH KÆMPE VISER, p. 143, AND FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1591

Der ligger en vold i Vester Haf,
Der agter en bondè at byggè:
Hand förer did baadè hög og hund,
Og agter der om vinteren at liggè.
(DE VILDE DIUR OG DIURENE UDI SKOFVEN.)

I

There liggs a wold in Wester Haf,
There a husbande means to bigg,
And thither he carries baith hawk and hound,
There meaning the winter to ligg.
(*The wild deer and daes i' the shaw out.*)

2

He taks wi' him baith hound and cock,
The langer he means to stay,
The wild deer in the shaws that are
May sairly rue the day.
(*The wild deer, etc.*)

3

He's hew'd the beech, and he's fell'd the aik,
Sae has he the poplar grey;
And grim in mood was the grewsome elf,
That be sae bald he may.

4

He hew'd him kipples, he hew'd him bawks,
Wi' mickle moil and haste;
Syne speer'd the Elf i' the knock that bade,
'Wha's hacking here sae fast?'

5

Syne up and spak the weiest Elf,
Crean'd as an immert sma:
'It's here is come a Christian man; —
I'll fley him or he ga.'

6

It's up syne started the firsten Elf,
And glowr'd about sae grim:
'It's we'll awa to the husbande's house,
And hald a court on him.

7

'Here hews he down baith skugg and shaw,
And works us skaith and scorn:
His huswife he sall gie to me; —
They's rue the day they were born!'

8

The Elfen a' i' the knock that were,
Gaed dancing in a string;
They nighed near the husband's house;
Sae lang their tails did hing.

9

The hound he yowls i' the yard,
The herd toots in his horn;
The earn scraichs, and the cock craws,
As the husbande had gi'en him his corn.[1]

10

The Elfen were five score and seven,
Sae laidly and sae grim;
And they the husbande's guests maun be,
To eat and drink wi' him.

11

The husbande, out o' Villenshaw,
At his winnock the Elves can see:
'Help me, now, Jesu, Mary's son;
Thir Elves they mint at me!'

12

In every nook a cross he coost,
In his chalmer maist ava;
The Elfen a' were fley'd thereat,
And flew to the wild-wood shaw.

[1] This singular quatrain stands thus in the original: —

Hunden hand giör i gaarden;
Hiorden tudè i sit horn;
Œrnen skriger, og hanen galer,
Som bonden hafdè gifvet sit korn.

13

And some flew east, and some flew west,
  And some to the norwart flew;
And some they flew to the deep dale down,
  There still they are, I trow.[1]

14

It was then the weiest Elf,
  In at the door braids he;
Agast was the husbande, for that Elf
  For cross nor sign wad flee.

15

The huswife she was a canny wife,
  She set the Elf at the board;
She set before him baith ale and meat,
  Wi' mony a well-waled word.

16

'Hear thou, Gudeman o' Villenshaw,
  What now I say to thee;
Wha bade thee bigg within our bounds,
  Without the leave o' me?

17

'But, an thou in our bounds will bigg,
  And bide, as well as may be,
Then thou thy dearest huswife maun
  To me for a lemman gie.'

[1] In the Danish:

Sommè flöyè oster, og sommè flöyè vester,
  Noglè flöyè nör paa;
Noglè flöyè ned i dybenè dalè,
  Jeg troer de erè der endnu.

18

Up spak the luckless husbande then,
As God the grace him gae:
'Eline she is to me sae dear,
Her thou may nae-gate hae.'

19

Till the Elf he answer'd as he couth:
'Lat but my huswife be,
And tak whate'er, o' gude or gear,
Is mine, awa wi' thee.'

20

'Then I'll thy Eline tak and thee,
Aneath my feet to tread;
And hide thy goud and white monie
Aneath my dwalling stead.'

21

The husbande and his household a'
In sary rede they join:
'Far better that she be now forfairn,
Nor that we a' should tyne.'

22

Up, will of rede, the husbande stood,
Wi' heart fu' sad and sair;
And he has gien his huswife Eline
Wi' the young Elfe to fare.

23

Then blyth grew he, and sprang about;
He took her in his arm:
The rud it left her comely cheek;
Her heart was clem'd wi' harm.

24

A waefu' woman then she was ane,
And the moody tears loot fa':
'God rew on me, unseely wife,
How hard a weird I fa'!

25

'My fay I plight to the fairest wight
That man on mold mat see; —
Maun I now mell wi' a laidly El,
His light lemman to be?'

26

He minted ance — he minted twice,
Wae wax'd her heart that syth:
Syne the laidliest fiend he grew that e'er
To mortal ee did kyth.

27

When he the thirden time can mint
To Mary's son she pray'd,
And the laidly Elf was clean awa,
And a fair knight in his stead.

28

This fell under a linden green,
That again his shape he found;
O' wae and care was the word nae mair,
A' were sae glad that stound.

29

'O dearest Eline, hear thou this,
And thou my wife sall be,
And a' the goud in merry England
Sae freely I 'll gi'e thee!

30

'Whan I was but a little wee bairn,
My mither died me fra;
My stepmither sent me awa fra her;
I turn'd till an Elfin Grey.

31

'To thy husband I a gift will gie,
Wi' mickle state and gear,
As mends for Eline his huswife; —
Thou 's be my heartis dear.' —

32

'Thou nobil knyght, we thank now God
That has freed us frae skaith;
Sae wed thou thee a maiden free,
And joy attend ye baith!

33

'Sin I to thee nae maik can be
My dochter may be thine;
And thy gud will right to fulfill,
Lat this be our propine.' —

34

'I thank thee, Eline, thou wise woman;
My praise thy worth sall ha'e;
And thy love gin I fail to win,
Thou here at hame sall stay.'

35

The husbande biggit now on his öe,
And nae ane wrought him wrang;
His dochter wore crown in Engeland,
And happy lived and lang.

36

Now Eline, the husbande's huswife, has
Cour'd a' her grief and harms;
She's mither to a noble queen
That sleeps in a kingis arms.

GLOSSARY

St.

1. *Wold*, a wood; woody fastness.
Husbande, from the Dan. *hos*, with, and *bonde*, a villain, or bondsman, who was a cultivator of the ground, and could not quit the estate to which he was attached without the permission of his lord. This is the sense of the word in the old Scottish records. In the Scottish '*Burghe Laws*,' translated from the *Reg. Majest.* (Auchinleck MS. in the Adv. Lib.) it is used indiscriminately with the Dan. and Swed. *bondè*.
Bigg, build.
Ligg, lie.
Daes, does.
2. *Shaw*, wood.
Sairly, sorely.
3. *Aik*, oak.
Grewsome, terrible.
Bald, bold.
4. *Kipples* (couples); beams joined at the top, for supporting a roof, in building.
Bawks, balks; cross beams.
Moil, laborious industry.
Speer'd, asked.
Knock, hillock.
5. *Weiest*, smallest.
Crean'd, shrunk, diminished; from the Gael. *crian*, very small.
Immert, emmet; ant.
Christian, used in the Danish ballads, etc., in contradistinction to *demoniac*, as it is in England, in contradistinction to *brute;* in which sense a person of the lower class in England would call a Jew or a Turk, a Christian.
Fley, frighten.
6. *Glowr'd*, stared.
Hald, hold.
7. *Skugg*, shade.
Skaith, harm.
8. *Nighed*, approached.
9. *Yowls*, howls.
Toots. — In the Dan. *tude* is applied both to the howling of a dog and the sound of a horn.
Scraichs, screams.

St.

10. *Laidly*, loathly; disgustingly ugly.
Grim, fierce.
11. *Winnock*, window.
Mint, aim at.
12. *Coost*, cast.
Chalmer, chamber.
Maist, most.
Ava, of all.
13. *Norwart*, northward.
Trow, believe.
14. *Braids*, strides quickly forward.
Wad, would.
15. *Canny*, adroit.
Mony, many.
Weel-waled, well-chosen.
17. *An*, if.
Bide, abide.
Lemman, mistress.
18. *Nae-gate*, nowise.
19. *Couth*, could; knew how to.
Lat be, let alone.
Gude, goods; property.
20. *Aneath*, beneath.
Dwalling-stead, dwelling-place.
21. *Sary*, sorrowful.
Rede, counsel; consultation.
Forfairn, forlorn; lost; gone.
Tyne (verb neut.), be lost; perish.
22. *Will of rede*, bewildered in thought; in the Danish original, *vildraadige;* Lat. *inops consilii;* Gr. ἄπορων. This expression is left among the *desiderata* in the Glossary to Ritson's *Romances*, and has never been explained. It is obsolete in the Danish as well as in English.
Fare, go.
23. *Rud*, red of the cheek.
Clem'd, in the Danish, *klemt* (which, in the north of England, is still in use, as the word 'starved' is with us); brought to a dying state. It is used by our old comedians.
Harm, grief; as in the original, and in the old Teutonic, English, and Scottish poetry.
24. *Waefu'*, woful.
Moody, strongly and wilfully passionate.
Rew, take ruth; pity.
Unseely, unhappy; unblest.

St.

Weird, fate.

Fa' (Isl. Dan. and Swed.), take; get; acquire; procure; have for my lot. — This Gothic verb answers, in its direct and secondary significations, exactly to the Latin *capio;* and Allan Ramsay was right in his definition of it. It is quite a different word from *fa'*, an abbreviation of *'fall* or *befall;* and is the principal root in *fangen*, to *fang*, take, or lay hold of.

25. *Fay*, faith.

Mold, mould; earth.

Mat, mote; might.

Maun, must.

Mell, mix.

El, an elf. This term, in the Welsh, signifies 'what has in itself the power of motion; a moving principle; an intelligence; a spirit; an angel.' In the Hebrew, it bears the same import.

26. *Minted*, attempted; meant; showed a mind, or intention to. The original is. —

'Hand *mindte* hende först — og anden gang; —
Hun giordis i hiortet sa vee:
End blef hand den *lediste* deifvel
Mand kunde med öyen see.
Der hand vilde *minde* den tredie gang.' etc.

Syth, tide; time.

Kyth, appear.

28. *Stound*, hour; time; moment.

29. *Merry* (old Teut. *merê*), famous; renowned; answering, in its etymological meaning, exactly to the Latin *mactus*. Hence 'merry-men,' as the address of a chief to his followers; meaning, not men of mirth, but of renown. The term is found in its original sense in the Gael. *marâ*, and the Welsh *mawr*, great; and in the oldest Teut. Romances, *mar*, *mer*, and *mere* have sometimes the same signification.

31. *Mends*, amends; recompense.

33. *Maik*, match; peer; equal.

Propine, pledge; gift.

35. *öe*, an island of the second magnitude; an island of the first magnitude being called a land, and one of the third magnitude a holm.

36. *Cour'd*, recover'd.

THE GHAIST'S WARNING

TRANSLATED FROM THE DANISH KÆMPE VISER, p. 721

By the permission of Mr. Jamieson, this ballad is added from the same curious Collection. It contains some passages of great pathos

Svend Dyring hand rider sig op under öè,
(Varè jeg selver ung)
Der fæstè hand sig saa ven en möè.
(Mig lyster udi lunden at ridè,) etc.

Child Dyring has ridden him up under öe,[1]
(And O gin I were young!)
There wedded he him sae fair[2] a may.
(I' the green wood it lists me to ride.)

[1] *Under öe.* — The original expression has been preserved here and elsewhere, because no other could be found to supply its place. There is just as much meaning in it in the translation as in the original; but it is a standard Danish ballad phrase; and as such, it is hoped, will be allowed to pass.

[2] *Fair.* — The Dan. and Swed. *ven*, *væn*, or *vennè*, and the Gael. *bân*, in the oblique cases *bhân* (*vân*), is the origin of the Scottish *bonny*, which has so much puzzled all the etymologists.

Thegither they lived for seven lang year,
(*And O, etc.*)
And they seven bairns hae gotten in fere.
(*I' the greenwood, etc.*)

Sae Death's come there intill that stead,
And that winsome lily flower is dead.

That swain he has ridden him up under öe,
And syne he has married anither may.

He's married a may, and he's fessen her hame;
But she was a grim and a laidly dame.

When into the castell court drave she,
The seven bairns stood wi' the tear in their ee.

The bairns they stood wi' dule and doubt; —
She up wi' her foot, and she kick'd them out.

Nor ale nor mead to the bairnies she gave:
'But hunger and hate frae me ye's have.'

She took frae them the bowster blae,
And said, 'Ye sall ligg i' the bare strae!'

She took frae them the groff wax-light:
Says, 'Now ye sall ligg i' the mirk a' night!'

'T was lang i' the night, and the bairnies grat:
Their mither she under the mools heard that;

That heard the wife under the eard that lay:
'For sooth maun I to my bairnies gae!'

That wife can stand up at our Lord's knee,
And 'May I gang and my bairnies see?'

She prigged sae sair, and she prigged sae lang,
That he at the last ga'e her leave to gang.

'And thou sall come back when the cock does craw;
For thou nae langer sall bide awa.'

Wi' her banes sae stark a bowt she gae;
She's riven baith wa' and marble gray.[1]

Whan near to the dwalling she can gang,
The dogs they wow'd till the lift it rang.

Whan she came till the castell yett,
Her eldest dochter stood thereat.

'Why stand ye here, dear dochter mine?
How are sma brithers and sisters thine?' —

'For sooth ye're a woman baith fair and fine;
But ye are nae dear mither of mine.' —

'Och! how should I be fine or fair?
My cheek it is pale, and the ground's my lair.' —

'My mither was white, wi' cheek sae red;
But thou art wan, and liker ane dead.' —

'Och! how should I be white and red,
Sae lang as I've been cauld and dead?'

When she cam till the chalmer in,
Down the bairns' cheeks the tears did rin.

[1] The original of this and the following stanza is very fine,

Hun sköd op sinè modigè been,
Der revenedè muur og graa marmorsteen.
Der hun gik igennem den by.
De hundè de tudè saa höjt i sky.

She buskit the tane, and she brush'd it there;
She kem'd and plaited the tither's hair.

The thirden she doodl'd upon her knee,
And the fourthen she dichted sae cannilie.

She's ta'en the fifthen upon her lap,
And sweetly suckled it at her pap.

Till her eldest dochter syne said she,
'Ye bid Child Dyring come here to me.'

Whan he cam till the chalmer in,
Wi' angry mood she said to him:

'I left you routh o' ale and bread;
My bairnies quail for hunger and need.

'I left ahind me braw bowsters blae;
My bairnies are liggin i' the bare strae.

'I left ye sae mony a groff wax-light;
My bairnies ligg i' the mirk a' night.

'Gin aft I come back to visit thee,
Wae, dowy, and weary thy luck shall be.'

Up spak little Kirstin in bed that lay:
'To thy bairnies I'll do the best I may.'

Aye when they heard the dog nirr and bell,
Sae ga'e they the bairnies bread and ale.

Aye whan the dog did wow, in haste
They cross'd and sain'd themsells frae the ghaist.

Aye whan the little dog yowl'd, with fear
(*And O gin I were young!*)
They shook at the thought that the dead was near.
(*I' the greenwood it lists me to ride.*)
or,
(*Fair words sae mony a heart they cheer.*)

GLOSSARY

St.
1. *May*, maid.
Lists, pleases.
2. *Bairns*, children.
In fere, together.
3. *Stead*, place.
Winsome, engaging; giving joy (old Teut.).
4. *Syne*, then.
5. *Fessen*, fetched; brought.
6. *Drave*, drove.
7. *Dule*, sorrow.
Doubt, fear.
9. *Bowster*, bolster; cushion; bed.
Blae, blue.
Strae, straw.
10. *Groff*, great; large in girt.
Mirk, dark.
11. *Lang i' the night*, late.
Grat, wept.
Mools, mould; earth.
12. *Eard*, earth.
Gae, go.
14. *Prigged*, entreated earnestly and perseveringly.
Gang, go.
15. *Craw*, crow.
16. *Banes*, bones.
Stark, strong.

St.
16. *Bowt*, bolt; elastic spring, like that of a bolt or arrow from a bow.
Riven, split asunder.
Wa', wall.
17. *Wow'd*, howled.
Lift, sky, firmament; air.
18. *Yett*, gate.
19. *Sma*, small.
23. *Cauld*, cold.
24. *Till*, to.
Rin, run.
25. *Buskit*, dressed.
Kem'd, combed.
Tither, the other.
30. *Routh*, plenty.
Quail, are quelled; die.
Need, want.
31. *Ahind*, behind.
Braw, brave; fine.
33. *Dowy*, sorrowful.
35. *Nirr*, snarl.
Bell, bark.
36. *Sained*, blessed; literally, signed with the sign of the cross. Before the introduction of Christianity, Runes were used in saining, as a spell against the power of enchantment and evil genii.
Ghaist, ghost.

NOTE 51, p. 122

In a long dissertation upon the Fairy Superstitions, published in the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, the most valuable part of which was supplied by my learned and indefatigable friend, Dr. John Leyden, most of the circumstances are collected which can throw light upon the popular belief which even yet prevails respecting them in Scotland. Dr. Graham, author of an entertaining work upon the scenery of the Perthshire Highlands, already frequently quoted, has recorded, with great accuracy,

the peculiar tenets held by the Highlanders on this topic, in the vicinity of Loch Katrine. The learned author is inclined to deduce the whole mythology from the Druidical system, — an opinion to which there are many objections.

'The Daoine Shi', or Men of Peace of the Highlanders, though not absolutely malevolent, are believed to be a peevish, repining race of beings, who, possessing themselves but a scanty portion of happiness, are supposed to envy mankind their more complete and substantial enjoyments. They are supposed to enjoy, in their subterraneous recesses, a sort of shadowy happiness, — a tinsel grandeur; which, however, they would willingly exchange for the more solid joys of mortality.

'They are believed to inhabit certain round grassy eminences, where they celebrate their nocturnal festivities by the light of the moon. About a mile beyond the source of the Forth, above Lochcon, there is a place called Coirshi'an, or the Cove of the Men of Peace, which is still supposed to be a favourite place of their residence. In the neighbourhood, are to be seen many round conical eminences; particularly one, near the head of the lake, by the skirts of which many are still afraid to pass after sunset. It is believed, that if, on Hallow-eve, any person, alone, goes round one of these hills nine times, towards the left hand (*sinistrorsum*) a door shall open, by which he will be admitted into their subterraneous abodes. Many, it is said, of mortal race, have been entertained in their secret recesses. There they have been received into the most splendid apartments, and regaled with the most sumptuous banquets, and delicious wines. Their females surpass the daughters of men in beauty. The *seemingly* happy inhabitants pass their time in festivity, and in dancing to notes of the softest music. But unhappy is the mortal who joins in their joys, or ventures to partake of their dainties. By this indulgence, he forfeits for ever the society of men, and is bound down irrevocably to the condition of Shi'ich, or Man of Peace.

'A woman, as is reported in the Highland tradition, was conveyed, in days of yore, into the secret recesses of the Men of

Peace. There she was recognised by one who had formerly been an ordinary mortal, but who had, by some fatality, become associated with the Shi'ichs. This acquaintance, still retaining some portion of human benevolence, warned her of her danger, and counselled her, as she valued her liberty, to abstain from eating and drinking with them, for a certain space of time. She complied with the counsel of her friend; and when the period assigned was elapsed, she found herself again upon earth, restored to the society of mortals. It is added, that when she examined the viands which had been presented to her, and which had appeared so tempting to the eye, they were found, now that the enchantment was removed, to consist only of the refuse of the earth.' (*Sketches of Scenery in Perthshire*, pp. 107–111.)

NOTE 52, p. 123

It has been already observed that fairies, if not positively malevolent, are capricious, and easily offended. They are, like other proprietors of forests, peculiarly jealous of their rights of vert and venison, as appears from the cause of offence taken, in the original Danish ballad. This jealousy was also an attribute of the northern Duergar or dwarfs; to many of whose distinctions the fairies seem to have succeeded, if, indeed, they are not the same class of beings. In the huge metrical record of German chivalry, entitled *Helden-Buch*, Sir Hildebrand, and the other heroes of whom it treats, are engaged in one of their most desperate adventures, from a rash violation of the rose-garden of an Elfin, or Dwarf, King.

There are yet traces of a belief in this worst and most malicious order of fairies, among the Border wilds. Dr. Leyden has introduced such a dwarf into his ballad entitled the *Cout of Keeldar*, and has not forgot his characteristic detestation of the chase.

> The third blast that young Keeldar blew,
> Stil stood the limber fern,
> And a wee man, of swarthy hue,
> Upstarted by a cairn.

His russet weeds were brown as heath,
That clothes the upland fell;
And the hair of his head was frizzly red
As the purple heather-bell.

An urchin, clad in prickles red,
Clung cow'ring to his arm;
The hounds they howl'd, and backward fled,
As struck by fairy charm.

'Why rises high the stag-hound's cry,
Where stag-hound ne'er should be?
Why wakes that horn the silent morn,
Without the leave of me?' —

'Brown dwarf, that o'er the muirland strays,
Thy name to Keeldar tell!' —
'The Brown Man of the Muirs, who stays
Beneath the heather-bell.

''T is sweet beneath the heather-bell
To live in autumn brown;
And sweet to hear the lav'rock's swell,
Far, far from tower and town.

'But woe betide the shrilling horn,
The chase's surly cheer!
And ever that hunter is forlorn,
Whom first at morn I hear.'

The poetical picture here given of the Duergar corresponds exactly with the following Northumbrian legend, with which I was lately favoured by my learned and kind friend, Mr. Surtees of Mainsforth, who has bestowed indefatigable labour upon the antiquities of the English Border counties. The subject is in itself so curious that the length of the note will, I hope, be pardoned.

'I have only one record to offer of the appearance of our Northumbrian Duergar. My narratrix is Elizabeth Cockburn, an old wife of Offerton, in this county, whose credit, in a case of this kind, will not, I hope, be much impeached, when I add, that she is, by her dull neighbours, supposed to be occasionally insane, but, by herself, to be at those times endowed with a faculty of seeing visions, and spectral appearances, which shun the common ken.

'In the year before the great rebellion, two young men from

Newcastle were sporting on the high moors above Elsdon, and after pursuing their game several hours, sat down to dine in a green glen, near one of the mountain streams. After their repast, the younger lad ran to the brook for water, and after stooping to drink, was surprised, on lifting his head again, by the appearance of a brown dwarf, who stood on a crag covered with brackens, across the burn. This extraordinary personage did not appear to be above half the stature of a common man, but was uncommonly stout and broad-built, having the appearance of vast strength. His dress was entirely brown, the colour of the brackens, and his head covered with frizzled red hair. His countenance was expressive of the most savage ferocity, and his eyes glared like a bull. It seems he addressed the young man first, threatening him with his vengeance, for having trespassed on his demesnes, and asking him if he knew in whose presence he stood? The youth replied, that he now supposed him to be the lord of the moors; that he offended through ignorance; and offered to bring him the game he had killed. The dwarf was a little mollified by this submission, but remarked, that nothing could be more offensive to him than such an offer, as he considered the wild animals as his subjects, and never failed to avenge their destruction. He condescended further to inform him, that he was, like himself, mortal, though of years far exceeding the lot of common humanity; and (what I should not have had an idea of) that he hoped for salvation. He never, he added, fed on any thing that had life, but lived, in the summer, on whortleberries, and in winter, on nuts and apples, of which he had great store in the woods. Finally, he invited his new acquaintance to accompany him home, and partake his hospitality; an offer which the youth was on the point of accepting, and was just going to spring across the brook, (which if he had done, says Elizabeth, the dwarf would certainly have torn him in pieces,) when his foot was arrested by the voice of his companion, who thought he had tarried long: and on looking round again, "the wee brown man was fled." The story adds, that he was imprudent enough to slight the admonition, and to sport over the

moors on his way homewards: but soon after his return, he fell into a lingering disorder, and died within the year.'

NOTE 53, p. 123

As the Daoine Shi', or Men of Peace, wore green habits, they were supposed to take offence when any mortals ventured to assume their favourite colour. Indeed, from some reason, which has been, perhaps, originally a general superstition, green is held in Scotland to be unlucky to particular tribes and counties. The Caithness men, who hold this belief, allege as a reason that their bands wore that colour when they were cut off at the battle of Flodden; and for the same reason they avoid crossing the Ord on a Monday, being the day of the week on which their ill-omened array set forth. Green is also disliked by those of the name of Ogilvy; but more especially is it held fatal to the whole clan of Grahame. It is remembered of an aged gentleman of that name, that when his horse fell in a fox-chase, he accounted for it at once by observing that the whip-cord attached to his lash was of this unlucky colour.

NOTE 54, p. 123

The Elves were supposed greatly to envy the privileges acquired by Christian initiation, and they gave to those mortals who had fallen into their power a certain precedence, founded upon this advantageous distinction. Tamlane, in the old ballad, describes his own rank in the fairy procession: —

> For I ride on a milk-white steed,
> And aye nearest the town;
> Because I was a christen'd knight,
> They give me that renown.

I presume that in the Danish ballad of *The Elfin Gray* the obstinacy of the 'weiest Elf,' who would not flee for cross or sign, is to be derived from the circumstance of his having been 'christen'd man.'

How eager the Elves were to obtain for their offspring the

prerogatives of Christianity, will be proved by the following story: —

'In the district called Haga, in Iceland, dwelt a nobleman called Sigward Forster, who had an intrigue with one of the subterranean females. The elf became pregnant, and exacted from her lover a firm promise that he would procure the baptism of the infant. At the appointed time, the mother came to the churchyard, on the wall of which she placed a golden cup, and a stole for the priest, agreeable to the custom of making an offering at baptism. She then stood a little apart. When the priest left the church, he enquired the meaning of what he saw, and demanded of Sigward, if he avowed himself the father of the child. But Sigward, ashamed of the connexion, denied the paternity. He was then interrogated if he desired that the child should be baptised; but this also he answered in the negative, lest, by such request, he should admit himself to be the father. On which the child was left untouched and unbaptised. Whereupon the mother, in extreme wrath, snatched up the infant and the cup, and retired, leaving the priestly cope, of which fragments are still in preservation. But this female denounced and imposed upon Sigward, and his posterity, to the ninth generation, a singular disease, with which many of his descendants are afflicted at this day.' Thus wrote Einar Dudmond, pastor of the parish of Garpsdale, in Iceland, a man profoundly versed in learning, from whose manuscript it was extracted by the learned Torfæus. (*Historia Hrolfi Krakii*, Hafniæ, 1715, *prefatio.*)

Note 55, p. 125

No fact respecting Fairy-land seems to be better ascertained than the fantastic and illusory nature of their apparent pleasure and splendour. It has been already noticed in the former quotations from Dr. Graham's entertaining volume, and may be confirmed by the following Highland tradition: —

'A woman, whose new-born child had been conveyed by them

into their secret abodes, was also carried thither herself, to remain, however, only until she should suckle her infant. She, one day, during this period, observed the Shi'ichs busily employed in mixing various ingredients in a boiling cauldron; and, as soon as the composition was prepared, she remarked that they all carefully anointed their eyes with it, laying the remainder aside for future use. In a moment when they were all absent, she also attempted to anoint her eyes with the precious drug, but had time to apply it to one eye only, when the Daoine Shi' returned. But with that eye she was henceforth enabled to see every thing as it really passed in their secret abodes: — She saw every object, not as she hitherto had done, in deceptive splendour and elegance, but in its genuine colours and form. The gaudy ornaments of the apartment were reduced to the walls of a gloomy cavern. Soon after, having discharged her office, she was dismissed to her own home. Still, however, she retained the faculty of seeing, with her medicated eye, every thing that was done, any where in her presence, by the deceptive art of the order. One day, amidst a throng of people, she chanced to observe the Shi'ich, or man of peace, in whose possession she had left her child; though to every other eye invisible. Prompted by maternal affection, she inadvertently accosted him, and began to enquire after the welfare of her child. The man of peace, astonished at being thus recognised by one of mortal race, demanded how she had been enabled to discover him. Awed by the terrible frown of his countenance, she acknowledged what she had done. He spat in her eye, and extinguished it for ever.' (Graham's *Sketches*, pp. 116–118.)

It is very remarkable that this story, translated by Dr. Grahame from popular Gaelic tradition, is to be found in the *Otia Imperialia* of Gervase of Tilbury. A work of great interest might be compiled upon the origin of popular fiction, and the transmission of similar tales from age to age, and from country to country. The mythology of one period would then appear to pass into the romance of the next century, and that into the nursery tale of the subsequent ages. Such an investigation,

while it went greatly to diminish our ideas of the richness of human invention, would also show that these fictions, however wild and childish, possess such charms for the populace as enable them to penetrate into countries unconnected by manners and language, and having no apparent intercourse to afford the means of transmission. It would carry me far beyond my bounds to produce instances of this community of fable, among nations who never borrowed from each other anything intrinsically worth learning. Indeed, the wide diffusion of popular fictions may be compared to the facility with which straws and feathers are dispersed abroad by the wind, while valuable metals cannot be transported without trouble and labour. There lives, I believe, only one gentleman, whose unlimited acquaintance with this subject might enable him to do it justice; I mean my friend Mr. Francis Douce, of the British Museum, whose usual kindness will, I hope, pardon my mentioning his name, while on a subject so closely connected with his extensive and curious researches.

Note 56, p. 125

The subjects of Fairy-land were recruited from the regions of humanity by a sort of 'crimping' system, which extended to adults as well as to infants. Many of those who were in this world supposed to have discharged the debt of nature, had only become denizens of the 'Londe of Faery.' In the beautiful *Fairy Romance of Orfee and Heurodiis* (Orpheus and Eurydice), in the Auchinleck MS., is the following striking enumeration of persons thus abstracted from middle earth. Mr. Ritson unfortunately published this romance from a copy in which the following, and many other highly poetical passages, do not occur: —

> Then he gan biholde about al,
> And seighe ful liggeand with in the wal,
> Of folk that wer thidder y-brought,
> And thought dede and nere nought;
> Some stode with outen hadde;

And sum none armes nade;
And sum thurch the bodi hadde wounde;
And sum lay wode y-bounde;
And sum armed on hors sete;
And sum astrangled as thai ete;
And sum war in water adreynt;
And sum with fire al forschreynt;
Wives ther lay on childe bedde;
Sum dede, and sum awedde;
And wonder fele ther lay besides,
Right as thai slepe her undertides;
Eche was thus in the warld y-nome,
With fairi thider y-come.

NOTE 57, p. 141

St. John actually used this illustration when engaged in confuting the plea of law proposed for the unfortunate Earl of Strafford: 'It was true, we gave laws to hares and deer, because they are beasts of chase: but it was never accounted either cruelty or foul play to knock foxes or wolves on the head as they can be found, because they are beasts of prey. In a word, the law and humanity were alike; the one being more fallacious, and the other more barbarous, than in any age had been vented in such an authority.' (Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*, Oxford, 1702, fol. vol., p. 183.)

NOTE 58, p. 142

The Scottish Highlanders in former times had a concise mode of cooking their venison, or rather of dispensing with cooking it, which appears greatly to have surprised the French, whom chance made acquainted with it. The Vidame of Charters, when a hostage in England during the reign of Edward VI, was permitted to travel into Scotland, and penetrated as far as to the remote Highlands (*au fin fond des Sauvages*). After a great hunting party, at which a most wonderful quantity of game was destroyed, he saw these Scottish savages devour a part of their venison raw, without any further preparation than compressing it between two batons of wood, so as to force out the blood, and render it extremely hard. This they reckoned a great delicacy;

and when the Vidame partook of it, his compliance with their taste rendered him extremely popular. This curious trait of manners was communicated by M. de Montmorency, a great friend of the Vidame, to Brantôme, by whom it is recorded in *Vies des Hommes Illustres, Discours*, lxxxix, art. 14. The process by which the raw venison was rendered eatable is described very minutely in the romance of Perceforest, where Estonne, a Scottish knight-errant, having slain a deer, says to his companion Claudius, —

'Sire, or mangerez vous et moy aussi. Voire si nous auions de feu, dit Claudius. Par l'ame de mon pere, dist Estonne, ie vous atourneray et cuiray a la maniere de nostre pays comme pour cheualier errant. Lors tira son espee, et sen vint a la branche dung arbre, et y fait vng grant trou, et puis fend la branche bien deux piedx, et boute la cuisse du cerf entredeux, et puis prent le licol de son cheval, et en lye la branche, et destraint si fort, que le sang et les humeurs de la chair saillent hors, et demeure la chair doulce et seiche. Lors prent la chair, et oste ius le cuir, et la chaire demeure aussi blanche comme si ce feust dung chappon. Dont dist a Claudius, Sire, ie la vous ay cuiste a la guise de mon pays, vous en pouez manger hardyement, car ie mangeray premier. Lors met sa main a sa selle en vng lieu quil y auoit, et tire hors sel et poudre de poiure et gingembre, mesle ensemble, et le iecte dessus, et le frote sus bien fort, puis le couppe a moytie, et en donne a Claudius l'une des pieces, et puis mort en l'autre aussi sauoureusement quil est aduis que il en feist la pouldre voller. Quant Claudius veit quil le mangeoit de tel goust, il en print grant faim, et commence a manger tresvoulentiers, et dist a Estonne: Par l'ame de moy, ie ne mangeay oncquesmais de chair atournee de telle guise: mais doresenauant ie ne me retourneroye pas hors de mon chemin par auoir la cuite. Sire, dist Estonne, quant is suis en desers d'Escosse, dont ie suis seigneur, ie cheuaucheray huit iours ou quinze que ie n'entreray en chastel ne en maison, et si ne verray feu ne personne viuant fors que bestes sauuages, et de celles mangeray atournees en ceste maniere, et mieulx me plaira que la viande de

l'empereur. Ainsi sen vont mangeant et cheuauchant iusques adonc quilz arriuerent sur une moult belle fontaine qui estoit en vne valee. Quant Estonne la vit il dist a Claudius, allons boire a ceste fontaine. Or beuuons, dist Estonne, du boire que le grant dieu a pourueu a toutes gens, et que me plaist mieulx que les ceruoises d'Angleterre.' (*La treselegante Hystoire du tresnoble Roy Perceforest*, Paris, 1531, fol. tome I, fol. lv, vers.)

After all, it may be doubted whether *la chaire nostree*, for so the French called the venison thus summarily prepared, was anything more than a mere rude kind of deer-ham.

NOTE 59, p. 149

There is scarcely a more disorderly period in Scottish history than that which succeeded the battle of Flodden, and occupied the minority of James V. Feuds of ancient standing broke out like old wounds, and every quarrel among the independent nobility, which occurred daily, and almost hourly, gave rise to fresh bloodshed. 'There arose,' says Pitscottie, 'great trouble and deadly feuds in many parts of Scotland, both in the north and west parts. The Master of Forbes, in the north, slew the Laird of Meldrum, under tryst' (i.e., at an agreed and secure meeting): 'Likewise, the Laird of Drummelzier slew the Lord Fleming at the hawking; and, likewise, there was slaughter among many other great lords ' (p. 121). Nor was the matter much mended under the government of the Earl of Angus; for though he caused the king to ride through all Scotland, 'under the pretence and colour of justice, to punish thief and traitor, none were found greater than were in their own company. And none at that time durst strive with a Douglas, nor yet a Douglas's man; for if they would, they got the worst. Therefore, none durst plainzie of no extortion, theft, reiff, nor slaughter, done to them by the Douglases, or their men; in that cause they were not heard, so long as the Douglas had the court in guiding.' (*History*, p. 133.)

NOTE 60, p. 150

The ancient Highlanders verified in their practice the lines of Gray: —

> An iron race the mountain cliffs maintain,
> Foes to the gentler genius of the plain;
> For where unwearied sinews must be found,
> With side-long plough to quell the flinty ground;
> To turn the torrent's swift descending flood;
> To tame the savage rushing from the wood;
> What wonder if, to patient valour train'd,
> They guard with spirit what by strength they gain'd;
> And while their rocky ramparts round they see
> The rough abode of want and liberty,
> (As lawless force from confidence will grow,)
> Insult the plenty of the vales below?
>
> *Fragment on the Alliance of Education and Government.*

So far, indeed, was a creagh or foray from being held disgraceful, that a young chief was always expected to show his talents for command so soon as he assumed it, by leading his clan on a successful enterprise of this nature, either against a neighbouring sept, for which constant feuds usually furnished an apology, or against the Sassenach (Saxons or Lowlanders), for which no apology was necessary. The Gael, great traditional historians, never forgot that the Lowlands had, at some remote period, been the property of their Celtic forefathers, which furnished an ample vindication of all the ravages that they could make on the unfortunate districts which lay within their reach. Sir James Grant of Grant is in possession of a letter of apology from Cameron of Lochiel, whose men had committed some depredation upon a farm called Moines, occupied by one of the Grants. Lochiel assures Grant, that, however the mistake had happened, his instructions were precise, that the party should foray the province of Moray (a Lowland district), where, as he coolly observes, 'all men take their prey.'

NOTE 61, p. 155

This incident, like some other passages in the poem illustrative of the character of the ancient Gael, is not imaginary, but

borrowed from fact. The Highlanders, with the inconsistency of most nations in the same state, were alternately capable of great exertions of generosity, and of cruel revenge and perfidy. The following story I can only quote from tradition, but with such an assurance from those by whom it was communicated, as permits me little doubt of its authenticity. Early in the last century, John Gunn, a noted cateran, or Highland robber, infested Inverness-shire, and levied blackmail up to the walls of the provincial capital. A garrison was then maintained in the castle of that town, and their pay (country banks being unknown) was usually transmitted in specie, under the guard of a small escort. It chanced that the officer who commanded this little party was unexpectedly obliged to halt, about thirty miles from Inverness, at a miserable inn. About nightfall, a stranger in the Highland dress, and of very prepossessing appearance, entered the same house. Separate accommodation being impossible, the Englishman offered the newly arrived guest a part of his supper, which was accepted with reluctance. By the conversation he found his new acquaintance knew well all the passes of the country, which induced him eagerly to request his company on the ensuing morning. He neither disguised his business and charge, nor his apprehensions of that celebrated freebooter, John Gunn. The Highlander hesitated a moment, and then frankly consented to be his guide. Forth they set in the morning; and in travelling through a solitary and dreary glen, the discourse again turned on John Gunn. 'Would you like to see him?' said the guide; and without waiting an answer to this alarming question, he whistled, and the English officer, with his small party, was surrounded by a body of Highlanders, whose numbers put resistance out of question, and who were all well armed. 'Stranger,' resumed the guide, 'I am that very John Gunn by whom you feared to be intercepted, and not without cause; for I came to the inn last night with the express purpose of learning your route, that I and my followers might ease you of your charge by the road. But I am incapable of betraying the trust you reposed in me, and having convinced you that you were in my power,

I can only dismiss you unplundered and uninjured.' He then gave the officer directions for his journey, and disappeared with his party, as suddenly as they had presented themselves.

Note 62, p. 156

The torrent which discharges itself from Loch Vennachar, the lowest and eastmost of the three lakes which form the scenery adjoining to the Trosachs, sweeps through a flat and extensive moor called Bochastle. Upon a small eminence, called the Dun of Bochastle, and indeed on the plain itself, are some intrenchments, which have been thought Roman. There is adjacent to Callender a sweet villa, the residence of Captain Fairfoul, entitled the Roman Camp.

Note 63, p. 156

The duellists of former times did not always stand upon those punctilios respecting equality of arms which are now judged essential to fair combat. It is true that, in formal combats in the lists, the parties were, by the judges of the field, put as nearly as possible in the same circumstances; but in private duel it was often otherwise. In that desperate combat which was fought between Quelus, a minion of Henry III of France, and Antraguet, with two seconds on each side, from which only two persons escaped alive, Quelus complained that his antagonist had over him the advantage of a poniard which he used in parrying, while his left hand, which he was forced to employ for the same purpose, was cruelly mangled. When he charged Antraguet with this odds, 'Thou hast done wrong,' answered he, 'to forget thy dagger at home. We are here to fight, and not to settle punctilios of arms.' In a similar duel, however, a younger brother of the house of Aubanye, in Angoulesme, behaved more generously on the like occasion, and at once threw away his dagger when his enemy challenged it as an undue advantage. But at this time hardly anything can be conceived more horridly brutal and sav-

age than the mode in which private quarrels were conducted in France. Those who were most jealous of the point of honour, and acquired the title of Raffinés, did not scruple to take every advantage of strength, numbers, surprise, and arms, to accomplish their revenge. The Sieur de Brantôme, to whose discourse on duels I am obliged for these particulars, gives the following account of the death and principles of his friend, the Baron de Vitaux: —

'J'ay oui conter à un Tireur d'armes, qui apprit à Millaud à en tirer, lequel s'appelloit Seigneur le Jacques Ferron, de la ville d'Ast, qui avoit esté à moy, il fut despuis tué à Saincte-Basille en Gascogne, lors que Monsieur du Mayne l'assiégea, lui servant d'Ingénieur; et de malheur, je l'avois addressé audit Baron quelques trois mois auparavant, pour l'exercer à tirer, bien qu'il en sçeust prou; mais il n'en fit compte: et le laissant, Millaud s'en servit, et le rendit fort adroit. Ce Seigneur Jacques donc me raconta, qu'il s'estoit monté sur un noyer, assez loing, pour en voir le combat, et qu'il ne vist jamais homme y aller plus bravement, ny plus résolument, ny de grace plus asseurée ny déterminée. Il commença de marcher de cinquante pas vers son ennemy, relevant souvent ses moustaches en haut d'une main; et estant à vingt pas de son ennemy, (non plustost,) il mit la main à l'espée qu'il tenoit en la main, non qu il l'eust tirée encore; mais en marchant, il fit voller le fourreau en l'air, en le secouant, ce qui est le beau de cela, et qui monstroit bien une grace de combat bien asseurée et froide, et nullement téméraire, comme il y en a qui tirent leurs espées de cinq cents pas de l'ennemy, voire de mille, comme j'en ay veu aucuns. Ainsi mourut ce brave Baron, le paragon de France, qu'on nommoit tel, à bien venger ses querelles, par grandes et déterminées résolutions. Il n'estoit pas seulement estimé en France, mais en Italie, Espaigne, Allemaigne, en Boulogne et Angleterre; et desiroient fort les Etrangers, venant en France, le voir; car je l'ay veu, tant sa renommée volloit. Il estoit fort petit de corps, mais fort grand de courage. Ses ennemis disoient qu'il ne tuoit pas bien ses gens, que par advantages et supercheries. Certes,

je tiens de grands capitaines, et mesme d'Italiens, qui ont estez d'autres fois les premiers vengeurs du monde, in *ogni modo*, disoient-ils, qui ont tenu cette maxime, qu'une supercherie ne se devoit payer que par semblable monnoye, et n'y alloit point là de déshonneur.' (*Œuvres de Brantôme*, Paris, 1787–88, VIII, 90–92.) It may be necessary to inform the reader that this paragon of France was the most foul assassin of his time, and had committed many desperate murders, chiefly by the assistance of his hired banditti; from which it may be conceived how little the point of honour of the period deserved its name. I have chosen to give my heroes, who are indeed of an earlier period, a stronger tincture of the spirit of chivalry.

NOTE 64, p. 159

A round target of light wood, covered with strong leather, and studded with brass or iron, was a necessary part of a Highlander's equipment. In charging regular troops they received the thrust of the bayonet in this buckler, twisted it aside, and used the broadsword against the encumbered soldier. In the civil war of 1745, most of the front rank of the clans were thus armed; and Captain Grose informs us that in 1747 the privates of the Forty-second Regiment, then in Flanders, were for the most part permitted to carry targets. (*Military Antiquities*, I, 164.) A person thus armed had a considerable advantage in private fray. Among verses between Swift and Sheridan, lately published by Dr. Barrett, there is an account of such an encounter, in which the circumstances, and consequently the relative superiority of the combatants, are precisely the reverse of those in the text: —

> A Highlander once fought a Frenchman at Margate,
> The weapons, a rapier, a backsword, and target;
> Brisk Monsieur advanced as fast as he could,
> But all his fine pushes were caught in the wood,
> And Sawny, with backsword, did slash him and nick him,
> While t' other, enraged that he could not once prick him,
> Cried, 'Sirrah, you rascal, you son of a whore,
> Me will fight you, be gar! if you'll come from your door.'

NOTE 65, p. 159

The use of defensive armour, and particularly of the buckler or target, was general in Queen Elizabeth's time, although that of the single rapier seems to have been occasionally practised much earlier.[1] Rowland Yorke, however, who betrayed the fort of Zutphen to the Spaniards, for which good service he was afterwards poisoned by them, is said to have been the first who brought the rapier fight into general use. Fuller, speaking of the swash-bucklers or bullies of Queen Elizabeth's time, says, 'West Smithfield was formerly called Ruffians' Hall, where such men usually met, casually or otherwise, to try "masteries" with sword and buckler. More were frightened than hurt, more hurt than killed therewith, it being accounted unmanly to strike beneath the knee. But since that desperate traitor Rowland Yorke first introduced thrusting with rapiers, sword and buckler are disused.' In *The Two Angry Women of Abingdon*, a comedy printed in 1599, we have a pathetic complaint: 'Sword and buckler fight begins to grow out of use. I am sorry for it: I shall never see good manhood again. If it be once gone, this poking fight of rapier and dagger will come up; then a tall man and a good sword and buckler man, will be spitted like a cat or rabbit.' But the rapier had, upon the continent, long superseded in private duel the use of sword and shield. The masters of the noble science of defence were chiefly Italians. They made great mystery of their art and mode of instruction, never suffered any person to be present but the scholar who was to be taught, and even examined closets, beds, and other places of possible concealment. Their lessons often gave the most treacherous advantages; for the challenger, having the right to choose his weapons, frequently selected some strange, unusual, and inconvenient kind of arms, the use of which he practised under these instructors, and thus killed at his ease his antagonist, to whom it was presented for the first time on the field of battle. (See Brantôme's *Discourse on Duels*, and the work on the same subject,

[1] See Douce's *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, II, 61.

'*si gentement ecrit*,' by the venerable Dr. Paris de Puteo.) The Highlanders continued to use broadsword and target until disarmed after the affair of 1745–46.

NOTE 66, p. 160

I have not ventured to render this duel so savagely desperate as that of the celebrated Sir Ewan of Lochiel, chief of the Clan Cameron, called, from his sable complexion, Ewan Dhu. He was the last man in Scotland who maintained the royal cause during the great civil war, and his constant incursions rendered him a very unpleasant neighbour to the republican garrison at Inverlochy, now Fort William. The governor of the fort detached a party of three hundred men to lay waste Lochiel's possessions, and cut down his trees; but, in a sudden and desperate attack made upon them by the chieftain with very inferior numbers, they were almost all cut to pieces. The skirmish is detailed in a curious memoir of Sir Ewan's life, printed in the Appendix of Pennant's *Scottish Tour* (I, 375): —

'In this engagement, Lochiel himself had several wonderful escapes. In the retreat of the English, one of the strongest and bravest of the officers retired behind a bush, when he observed Lochiel pursuing, and seeing him unaccompanied with any, he leapt out, and thought him his prey. They met one another with equal fury. The combat was long and doubtful: the English gentleman had by far the advantage in strength and size; but Lochiel, exceeding him in nimbleness and agility, in the end tript the sword out of his hand: they closed and wrestled, till both fell to the ground in each other's arms. The English officer got above Lochiel, and pressed him hard, but stretching forth his neck, by attempting to disengage himself, Lochiel, who by this time had his hands at liberty, with his left hand seized him by the collar, and jumping at his extended throat, he bit it with his teeth quite through, and kept such a hold of his grasp, that he brought away his mouthful: this, he said, *was the sweetest bit he ever had in his lifetime*.'

NOTE 67, p. 166

An eminence on the north-east of the castle, where state criminals were executed. Stirling was often polluted with noble blood. It is thus apostrophised by J. Johnston: —

> Discordia tristis
> Heu quoties procerum sanguine tinxit humum!
> Hoc uno infelix, et felix cetera; nusquam
> Lætior aut cœli frons geniusve soli.

The fate of William, eighth Earl of Douglas, whom James II stabbed in Stirling Castle with his own hand and while under his royal safe-conduct, is familiar to all who read Scottish history. Murdack, Duke of Albany, Duncan Earl of Lennox, his father-in-law, and his two sons, Walter and Alexander Stuart, were executed at Stirling, in 1425. They were beheaded upon an eminence without the castle walls, but making part of the same hill, from whence they could behold their strong castle of Doune, and their extensive possessions. This 'heading hill,' as it was sometimes termed, bears commonly the less terrible name of Hurly-hacket, from its having been the scene of a courtly amusement alluded to by Sir David Lindsay, who says of the pastimes in which the young king was engaged, —

> Some harled him to the Hurly-hacket;

which consisted in sliding, in some sort of chair it may be supposed, from top to bottom of a smooth bank. The boys of Edinburgh, about twenty years ago, used to play at the hurly-hacket on the Calton Hill, using for their seat a horse's skull.

NOTE 68, p. 166

Every burgh of Scotland of the least note, but more especially the considerable towns, had their solemn play or festival, when feats of archery were exhibited, and prizes distributed to those

who excelled in wrestling, hurling the bar, and the other gymnastic exercises of the period. Stirling, a usual place of royal residence, was not likely to be deficient in pomp upon such occasions, especially since James V was very partial to them. His ready participation in these popular amusements was one cause of his acquiring the title of King of the Commons, or *Rex Plebeiorum*, as Lesley has latinised it. The usual prize to the best shooter was a silver arrow. Such a one is preserved at Selkirk and at Peebles. At Dumfries, a silver gun was substituted, and the contention transferred to fire-arms. The ceremony, as there performed, is the subject of an excellent Scottish poem, by Mr. John Mayne, entitled the *Siller Gun*, 1808, which surpasses the efforts of Ferguson, and comes near those of Burns.

Of James's attachment to archery, Pitscottie, the faithful though rude recorder of the manners of that period, has given us evidence: —

'In this year there came an embassador out of England, named Lord William Howard, with a bishop with him, with many other gentlemen, to the number of threescore horse, which were all able men and waled [picked] men for all kind of games and pastimes, shooting, louping, running, wrestling, and casting of the stone, but they were well 'sayed [essayed or tried] ere they past out of Scotland, and that by their own provocation; but ever they tint: till at last, the Queen of Scotland, the king's mother, favoured the Englishmen, because she was the King of England's sister: and therefore she took an enterprise of archery upon the English-men's hands, contrary her son the king, and any six in Scotland that he would wale, either gentlemen or yeomen, that the English-men should shoot against them, either at pricks, revers, or buts, as the Scots pleased.

'The king, hearing this of his mother, was content, and gart her pawn a hundred crowns, and a tun of wine, upon the English-men's hands; and he incontinent laid down as much for the Scottish-men. The field and ground was chosen in St. Andrews, and three landed men and three yeomen chosen to shoot against the English-men, to wit, David Wemyss of that ilk, David

Arnot of that ilk, and Mr. John Wedderburn, vicar of Dundee; the yeomen, John Thomson, in Leith, Steven Taburner, with a piper, called Alexander Bailie; they shot very near, and warred [worsted] the English-men of the enterprise, and wan the hundred crowns and the tun of wine, which made the king very merry that his men wan the victory.' (*History*, p. 147.)

NOTE 69, p. 168

The exhibition of this renowned outlaw and his band was a favourite frolic at such festivals as we are describing. This sporting, in which kings did not disdain to be actors, was prohibited in Scotland upon the Reformation, by a statute of the sixth Parliament of Queen Mary, c. 61, A.D. 1555, which ordered, under heavy penalties, that, 'na manner of person be chosen Robert Hude, nor Little John, Abbot of Unreason, Queen of May, nor otherwise.' But in 1561 the 'rascal multitude,' says John Knox, 'were stirred up to make a Robin Hude, whilk enormity was of many years left and damned by statute and act of Parliament; yet would they not be forbidden.' Accordingly, they raised a very serious tumult, and at length made prisoners the magistrates who endeavoured to suppress it, and would not release them till they extorted a formal promise that no one should be punished for his share of the disturbance. It would seem from the complaints of the General Assembly of the Kirk that these profane festivities were continued down to 1591.[1] Bold Robin was, to say the least, equally successful in maintaining his ground against the reformed clergy of England; for the simple and evangelical Latimer complains of coming to a country church, where the people refused to hear him, because it was Robin Hood's day; and his mitre and rochet were fain to give way to the village pastime. Much curious information on this subject may be found in the Preliminary Dissertation to the late Mr. Ritson's edition of the songs respecting this memorable

[1] *Book of the Universal Kirk*, p. 414.

outlaw. The game of Robin Hood was usually acted in May; and he was associated with the morrice-dancers, on whom so much illustration has been bestowed by the commentators on Shakespeare. A very lively picture of these festivities, containing a great deal of curious information on the subject of the private life and amusements of our ancestors, was thrown, by the late ingenious Mr. Strutt, into his romance entitled *Queenhoo Hall*, published after his death, in 1808.

Note 70, p. 169

The Douglas of the poem is an imaginary person, a supposed uncle of the Earl of Angus. But the king's behaviour during an unexpected interview with the Laird of Kilspindie, one of the banished Douglases, under circumstances similar to those in the text, is imitated from a real story told by Hume of Godscroft. I would have availed myself more fully of the simple and affecting circumstances of the old history, had they not been already woven into a pathetic ballad by my friend Mr. Finlay.[1]

'His (the king's) implacability (towards the family of Douglas) did also appear in his carriage towards Archibald of Kilspindie, whom he, when he was a child, loved singularly well for his ability of body, and was wont to call him his Grey-Steill.[2] Archibald, being banished into England, could not well comport with the humour of that nation, which he thought to be too proud, and that they had too high a conceit of themselves, joined with a contempt and despising of all others. Wherefore, being wearied of that life, and remembering the king's favour of old towards him, he determined to try the king's mercifulness and clemency. So he comes into Scotland, and taking occasion of the king's hunting in the park at Stirling, he casts himself to be in his way, as he was coming home to the castle. So soon as the king saw him afar off, ere he came near, he guessed it was he, and said to one of his courtiers, yonder is my Grey-Steill,

[1] See *Scottish Historical and Romantic Ballads*, Glasgow, 1808, II, 117.
[2] A champion of popular romance. See Ellis's *Romances*, III.

Archibald of Kilspindie, if he be alive. The other answered, that it could not be he, and that he durst not come into the king's presence. The king approaching, he fell upon his knees and craved pardon, and promised from thenceforward to abstain from meddling in public affairs, and to lead a quiet and private life. The king went by, without giving him any answer, and trotted a good round pace up the hill. Kilspindie followed, and, though he wore on him a secret, or shirt of mail, for his particular enemies, was as soon at the castle gate as the king. There he sat him down upon a stone without, and entreated some of the king's servants for a cup of drink, being weary and thirsty; but they, fearing the king's displeasure, durst give him none. When the king was set at his dinner, he asked what he had done, what he had said, and whither he had gone? It was told him that he had desired a cup of drink, and had gotten none. The king reproved them very sharply for their discourtesy, and told them, that if he had not taken an oath that no Douglas should ever serve him, he would have received him into his service, for he had seen him sometime a man of great ability. Then he sent him word to go to Leith, and expect his further pleasure. Then some kinsman of David Falconer, the canonier, that was slain at Tantallon, began to quarrel with Archibald about the matter, wherewith the king showed himself not well pleased when he heard of it. Then he commanded him to go to France for a certain space, till he heard further from him. And so he did, and died shortly after. This gave occasion to the King of England (Henry VIII) to blame his nephew, alleging the old saying, That a king's face should give grace. For this Archibald (whatsoever were Angus's or Sir George's fault) had not been principal actor of any thing, nor no counsellor nor stirrer up, but only a follower of his friends, and that noways cruelly disposed.' (Hume of Godscroft, II, 107.)

NOTE 71, p. 169

The usual prize of a wrestling was a ram and a ring, but the

animal would have embarrassed my story. Thus, in the *Cokes Tale of Gamelyn*, ascribed to Chaucer: —

> There happed to be there beside
> Tryed a wrestling;
> And therefore there was y-setten
> A ram and als a ring.

Again the *Litil Geste of Robin Hood:* —

> By a bridge was a wrestling,
> And there taryed was he,
> And there was all the best yemen
> Of all the west countrey.
> A full fayre game there was set up,
> A white bull up y-pight,
> A great courser with saddle and brydle,
> With gold burnished full bryght;
> A payre of gloves, a red golde ringe,
> A pipe of wyne, good fay;
> What man bereth him best, I wis,
> The prise shall bear away.

Ritson's *Robin Hood*, I.

NOTE 72, p. 183

The Scottish armies consisted chiefly of the nobility and barons, with their vassals, who held lands under them, for military service by themselves and their tenants. The patriarchal influence exercised by the heads of clans in the Highlands and Borders was of a different nature, and sometimes at variance with feudal principles. It flowed from the *Patria Potestas*, exercised by the chieftain as representing the original father of the whole name, and was often obeyed in contradiction to the feudal superior. James V seems first to have introduced, in addition to the militia furnished from these sources, the service of a small number of mercenaries, who formed a body-guard, called the Foot-Band. The satirical poet Sir David Lindsay (or the person who wrote the Prologue to his play of the *Three Estaites*,) has introduced Finlay of the Foot-Band, who, after much swaggering upon the stage, is at length put to flight by the Fool, who terrifies him by means of a sheep's skull upon a pole. I have rather chosen to give them the harsh features of the mercenary soldiers of the period, than of this Scottish

Thraso. These partook of the character of the Adventurous Companions of Froissart, or the Condottieri of Italy.

One of the best and liveliest traits of such manners is the last will of a leader, called Geffroy Tête Noir, who having been slightly wounded in a skirmish, his intemperance brought on a mortal disease. When he found himself dying, he summoned to his bedside the adventurers whom he commanded, and thus addressed them: —

'Fayre sirs, quod Geffray, I knowe well ye have alwayes served and honoured me as men ought to serve their soveraynge and capitayne, and I shal be the gladder if ye wyll agre to have to your capitayne one that is discended of my bloode. Beholde here Aleyne Roux, my cosyn, and Peter his brother, who are men of armes and of my blode. I require you to make Aleyne youre capitayne, and to swere to hym faythe, obeysaunce, love, and loyalte, here in my presence, and also to his brother: howe be it, I wyll that Aleyne have the soverayne charge. Sir, quod they, we are well content, for ye hauve ryght well chosen. There all the companyons made them breke no poynt of that ye have ordayned and commaunded.' (Lord Berners' *Froissart.*)

Note 73, p. 186

The jongleurs or jugglers, as we learn from the elaborate work of the late Mr. Strutt, on the sports and pastimes of the people of England, used to call in the aid of various assistants, to render these performances as captivating as possible. The glee-maiden was a necessary attendant. Her duty was tumbling and dancing; and therefore the Anglo-Saxon version of St. Mark's Gospel states Herodias to have vaulted or tumbled before King Herod. In Scotland, these poor creatures seem, even at a late period, to have been bondswomen to their masters, as appears from a case reported by Fountainhall: —

'Reid the mountebank pursues Scot of Harden and his lady, for stealing away from him a little girl, called the tumbling-lassie, that danced upon his stage: and he claimed damages,

and produced a contract, whereby he bought her from her mother for 30*l.* Scots. But we have no slaves in Scotland, and mothers cannot sell their bairns; and physicians attested, the employment of tumbling would kill her; and her joints were now grown stiff, and she declined to return; though she was at least a 'prentice, and so could not run away from her master: yet some cited Moses's law, that if a servant shelter himself with thee, against his master's cruelty, thou shalt surely not deliver him up. The Lords, *renitente cancellario*, assoilzied Harden, on the 27th of January (1687.)' (Fountainhall's *Decisions*, I, p. 439.)[1]

The facetious qualities of the ape soon rendered him an acceptable addition to the strolling band of the jongleur. Ben Jonson, in his splenetic introduction to the comedy of *Bartholomew Fair*, is at pains to inform the audience 'that he has ne'er a sword-and-buckler man in his Fair, nor a juggler, with a well-educated ape, to come over the chaine for the King of England, and back again for the prince, and sit still on his haunches for the Pope and the King of Spaine.'

NOTE 74, p. 195

There are several instances, at least in tradition, of persons so much attached to particular tunes as to require to hear them on their deathbed. Such an anecdote is mentioned by the late Mr. Riddel of Glenriddel, in his collection of Border tunes, respecting an air called the *Dandling of the Bairns*, for which a certain Gallovidian laird is said to have evinced this strong mark of partiality. It is popularly told of a famous freebooter, that he composed the tune known by the name of *Macpherson's Rant* while under sentence of death, and played it at the gallows-tree. Some spirited words have been adapted to it by Burns. A sim-

[1] Though less to my purpose, I cannot help noticing a circumstance respecting another of this Mr. Reid's attendants, which occurred during James II's zeal for Catholic proselytism, and is told by Fountainhall, with dry Scottish irony. 'January 17th, 1687. — Reid the mountebank is received into the Popish church, and one of his blackamores was persuaded to accept of baptism from the Popish priests, and to turn Christian papist; which was a great trophy: he was called James, after the king and chancellor, and the Apostle James.' (*Decisions*, p. 440.)

ilar story is recounted of a Welsh bard, who composed and played on his deathbed the air called *Dafyddy Garregg Wen*. But the most curious example is given by Brantôme, of a maid of honour at the court of France, entitled *Mademoiselle de Limeuil*.

'Durant sa maladie, dont elle trespassa, jamais elle ne cessa, ains causa tousjours; car elle estoit fort grande parleuse, brocardeuse, et très-bien et fort à propos, et très-belle avec cela. Quand l'heure de sa fin fut venue, elle fit venir a soy son valet, (ainsi que le filles de la cour en ont chacune un,) qui s'appelloit Julien, et scavoit très-bien joüer du violon. "Julien," luy dit elle, "prenez vostre violon, et sonnez moy tousjours jusques a ce que me voyez morte (car je m'y en vais) la défaite des Suisses, et le mieux que vous pourrez, et quand vous serez sur le mot, 'Tout est perdu,' sonnez le par quatre ou cing fois, le plus piteusement que vous pourrez," ce qui fit l'autre, et elle-mesme luy aidoit de la voix, et quand ce vint "tout est perdu," elle le réïtera par deux fois; et se tournant de l'autre costé du chevet, elle dit à ses compagnes: "Tout est perdu à ce coup, et à bon escient;" et ainsi décéda. Voila une morte joyeuse et plaisante. Je tiens ce conte de deux de ses compagnes, dignes de foi, qui virent joüer ce mystere.' (*Œuvres de Brantôme*, III, 507.)

The tune to which this fair lady chose to make her final exit was composed on the defeat of the Swiss at Marignano. The burden is quoted by Panurge, in Rabelais, and consists of these words, imitating the jargon of the Swiss, which is a mixture of French and German: —

'Tout est velore
La Tintelore,
Tout est verlore, bi Got!'

NOTE 75, p. 196

A skirmish actually took place at a pass thus called in the Trosachs, and closed with the remarkable incident mentioned in the text. It was greatly posterior in date to the reign of James V.

'In this roughly-wooded island,[1] the country people secreted

[1] That at the eastern extremity of Loch Katrine, so often mentioned in the text.

their wives and children, and their most valuable effects, from the rapacity of Cromwell's soldiers, during their inroad into this country, in the time of the republic. These invaders, not venturing to ascend by the ladders, along the side of the lake, took a more circuitous road, through the heart of the Trosachs, the most frequented path at that time, which penetrates the wilderness about half way between Binean and the lake, by a tract called Yea-chilleach, or the Old Wife's Bog.

'In one of the defiles of this by-road, the men of the country at that time hung upon the rear of the invading enemy, and shot one of Cromwell's men, whose grave marks the scene of action, and gives name to that pass.[1] In revenge of this insult the soldiers resolved to plunder the island, to violate the women, and put the children to death. With this brutal intention, one of the party, more expert than the rest, swam towards the island, to fetch the boat to his comrades, which had carried the women to their asylum, and lay moored in one of the creeks. His companions stood on the shore of the mainland, in full view of all that was to pass, waiting anxiously for his return with the boat. But just as the swimmer had got to the nearest point of the island, and was laying hold of a black rock, to get on shore, a heroine, who stood on the very point where he meant to land, hastily snatching a dagger from below her apron, with one stroke severed his head from the body. His party seeing this disaster, and relinquishing all future hope of revenge or conquest, made the best of their way out of their perilous situation. This amazon's great-grandson lives at Bridge of Turk, who, besides others, attests the anecdote.' (*Sketch of the Scenery near Callender*, Stirling, 1806, p. 20.) I have only to add to this account that the heroine's name was Helen Stuart.

Note 76, p. 199

A circle of sportsmen, who, by surrounding a great space and gradually narrowing, brought immense quantities of deer

[1] Beallach an duine.

together, which usually made desperate efforts to break through the Tinchel.

NOTE 77, p. 211

This discovery will probably remind the reader of the beautiful Arabian tale of *Il Bondocani*. Yet the incident is not borrowed from that elegant story, but from Scottish tradition. James V, of whom we are treating, was a monarch whose good and benevolent intentions often rendered his romantic freaks venial, if not respectable, since, from his anxious attention to the interests of the lower and most oppressed class of his subjects, he was, as we have seen, popularly termed the King of the Commons. For the purpose of seeing that justice was regularly administered, and frequently from the less justifiable motive of gallantry, he used to traverse the vicinage of his several palaces in various disguises. The two excellent comic songs, entitled *The Gaberlunzie Man*, and *We'll gae nae mair a Roving*, are said to have been founded upon the success of his amorous adventures when travelling in the disguise of a beggar. The latter is perhaps the best comic ballad in any language.

Another adventure, which had nearly cost James his life, is said to have taken place at the village of Cramond, near Edinburgh, where he had rendered his addresses acceptable to a pretty girl of the lower rank. Four or five persons, whether relations or lovers of his mistress is uncertain, beset the disguised monarch, as he returned from his rendezvous. Naturally gallant, and an admirable master of his weapon, the king took post on the high and narrow bridge over the Almond River, and defended himself bravely with his sword. A peasant, who was threshing in a neighbouring barn, came out upon the noise, and, whether moved by compassion or by natural gallantry, took the weaker side, and laid about with his flail so effectually as to disperse the assailants, well threshed, even according to the letter. He then conducted the king into his barn, where his guest requested a basin and a towel, to remove the stains of the broil. This being procured with difficulty, James employed

himself in learning what was the summit of his deliverer's earthly wishes, and found that they were bounded by the desire of possessing, in property, the farm of Braehead, upon which he laboured as a bondsman. The lands chanced to belong to the crown; and James directed him to come to the palace of Holyrood, and enquire for the Guidman (i.e., farmer) of Ballengiech, a name by which he was known in his excursions, and which answered to the *Il Bondocani* of Haroun Alraschid. He presented himself accordingly, and found, with due astonishment, that he had saved his monarch's life, and that he was to be gratified with a crown-charter of the lands of Braehead, under the service of presenting a ewer, basin, and towel, for the king to wash his hands, when he shall happen to pass the Bridge of Cramond. This person was ancestor of the Howisons of Braehead, in Mid-Lothian, a respectable family, who continue to hold the lands (now passed into the female line) under the same tenure.

Another of James's frolics is thus narrated by Mr. Campbell, from the *Statistical Account:* 'Being once benighted when out a-hunting, and separated from his attendants, he happened to enter a cottage in the midst of a moor, at the foot of the Ochil hills, near Alloa, where, unknown, he was kindly received. In order to regale their unexpected guest, the gudeman (i.e., landlord, farmer) desired the gudewife to fetch the hen that roosted nearest the cock, which is always the plumpest, for the stranger's supper. The king, highly pleased with his night's lodging and hospitable entertainment, told mine host, at parting, that he should be glad to return his civility, and requested that the first time he came to Stirling he would call at the castle, and enquire for the Gudeman of Ballenguich. Donaldson, the landlord, did not fail to call on the Gudeman of Ballenguich, when his astonishment at finding that the king had been his guest afforded no small amusement to the merry monarch and his courtiers; and, to carry on the pleasantry, he was thenceforth designated by James with the title of King of the Moors, which name and designation have descended from father to son ever since, and they

have continued in possession of the identical spot, the property of Mr. Erskine of Mar, till very lately, when this gentleman, with reluctance, turned out the descendant and representative of the King of the Moors, on account of his majesty's invincible indolence, and great dislike to reform or innovation of any kind, although, from the spirited example of his neighbour tenants on the same estate, he is convinced similar exertion would promote his advantage.'

The author requests permission yet further to verify the subject of his poem, by an extract from the genealogical work of Buchanan of Auchmar, upon Scottish surnames.

'This John Buchanan of Auchmar and Arnpryor was afterwards termed King of Kippen,[1] upon the following account: King James V, a very sociable, debonair prince, residing at Stirling, in Buchanan of Arnpryor's time, carriers were very frequently passing along the common road, being near Arnpryor's house, with necessaries for the use of the king's family; and he, having some extraordinary occasion, ordered one of these carriers to leave his load at his house, and he would pay him for it; which the carrier refused to do, telling him he was the king's carrier, and his load for his majesty's use; to which Arnpryor seemed to have small regard, compelling the carrier, in the end, to leave his load; telling him, if King James was King of Scotland, he was King of Kippen, so that it was reasonable he should share with his neighbour king in some of these loads, so frequently carried that road. The carrier representing this usage, and telling the story, as Arnpryor spoke it, to some of the king's servants, it came at length to his majesty's ears, who, shortly thereafter, with a few attendants, came to visit his neighbour king, who was in the mean time at dinner. King James having sent a servant to demand access, was denied the same by a tall fellow with a battle-axe who stood porter at the gate, telling, there could be no access till dinner was over. This answer not satisfying the king, he sent to demand access a second time; upon which he was desired by the porter to desist,

[1] A small district of Perthshire.

otherwise he would find cause to repent his rudeness. His majesty finding this method would not do, desired the porter to tell his master that the Goodman of Ballageigh desired to speak with the King of Kippen. The porter telling Arnpryor so much, he, in all humble manner, came and received the king, and having entertained him with much sumptuousness and jollity, became so agreeable to King James, that he allowed him to take so much of any provision he found carrying that road as he had occasion for; and seeing he made the first visit, desired Arnpryor in a few days to return him a second to Stirling, which he performed, and continued in very much favour with the king, always thereafter being termed King of Kippen while he lived.' (Buchanan's *Essay upon the Family of Buchanan*, Edinburgh, 1775, 8vo, p. 74.)

The readers of Ariosto must give credit for the amiable features with which he is represented, since he is generally considered as the prototype of Zerbino, the most interesting hero of the *Orlando Furioso*.

Note 78, p. 213

William of Worcester, who wrote about the middle of the fifteenth century, calls Stirling Castle Snowdoun. Sir David Lindsay bestows the same epithet upon it in his *Complaint of the Papingo:* —

> 'Adieu, fair Snawdoun, with thy towers high,
> Thy chaple-royal, park, and table round;
> May, June, and July, would I dwell in thee,
> Were I a man, to hear the birdis sound,
> Whilk doth againe thy royal rock rebound.'

Mr. Chalmers, in his late excellent edition of Sir David Lindsay's works, has refuted the chimerical derivation of Snawdoun from snedding, or cutting. It was probably derived from the romantic legend which connected Stirling with King Arthur, to which the mention of the Round Table gives countenance. The ring within which justs were formerly practised, in the castle

park, is still called the Round Table. Snawdoun is the official title of one of the Scottish heralds, whose epithets seem in all countries to have been fantastically adopted from ancient history or romance.

It appears that the real name by which James was actually distinguished in his private excursions, was the Goodman of Ballenguich; derived from a steep pass leading up to the Castle of Stirling, so called. But the epithet would not have suited poetry, and would besides at once, and prematurely, have announced the plot to many of my countrymen, among whom the traditional stories above mentioned are still current.

Note 79, p. 318

The reaper in Flanders carries in his left hand a stick with an iron hook, with which he collects as much grain as he can cut at one sweep with a short scythe, which he holds in his right hand. They carry on this double process with great spirit and dexterity.

Note 80, p. 323

It was affirmed by the prisoners of war that Bonaparte had promised his army, in case of victory, twenty-four hours' plunder of the city of Brussels.

Note 81, p. 324

The characteristic obstinacy of Napoleon was never more fully displayed than in what we may be permitted to hope will prove the last of his fields. He would listen to no advice, and allow of no obstacles. An eyewitness has given the following account of his demeanour towards the end of the action: —

'It was near seven o'clock; Bonaparte, who till then had remained upon the ridge of the hill whence he could best behold what passed, contemplated with a stern countenance, the scene of this horrible slaughter. The more that obstacles seemed to multiply, the more his obstinacy seemed to increase. He became indignant at these unforeseen difficulties; and, far from fearing

to push to extremities an army whose confidence in him was boundless, he ceased not to pour down fresh troops, and to give orders to march forward — to charge with the bayonet — to carry by storm. He was repeatedly informed, from different points, that the day went against him, and that the troops seemed to be disordered; to which he only replied, "En-avant! En-avant!"

'One general sent to inform the Emperor that he was in a position which he could not maintain, because it was commanded by a battery, and requested to know, at the same time, in what way he should protect his division from the murderous fire of the English artillery. "Let him storm the battery," replied Bonaparte, and turned his back on the aide-de-camp who brought the message.' (*Relatione de la Bataille de Mont-St.-Jean. Par un Témoin Oculaire*, Paris, 1815, 8vo, p. 51.)

Note 82, p. 325

It has been reported that Bonaparte charged at the head of his guards, at the last period of this dreadful conflict. This, however, is not accurate. He came down, indeed, to a hollow part of the highroad, leading to Charleroi, within less than a quarter of a mile of the farm of La Haye Sainte, one of the points most fiercely disputed. Here he harangued the guards, and informed them that his preceding operations had destroyed the British infantry and cavalry, and that they had only to support the fire of the artillery, which they were to attack with the bayonet. This exhortation was received with shouts of 'Vive l'Empereur,' which were heard over all our line, and led to an idea that Napoleon was charging in person. But the guards were led on by Ney; nor did Bonaparte approach nearer the scene of action than the spot already mentioned, which the rising banks on each side rendered secure from all such balls as did not come in a straight line. He witnessed the earlier part of the battle from places yet more remote, particularly from an observatory which had been placed there by the King of the Nether-

lands, some weeks before, for the purpose of surveying the country.[1] It is not meant to infer from these particulars that Napoleon showed, on that memorable occasion, the least deficiency in personal courage; on the contrary, he evinced the greatest composure and presence of mind during the whole action. But it is no less true that report has erred in ascribing to him any desperate efforts of valour for recovery of the battle; and it is remarkable that during the whole carnage none of his suite were either killed or wounded, whereas scarcely one of the Duke of Wellington's personal attendants escaped unhurt.

Note 83, p. 325

In riding up to a regiment which was hard-pressed, the duke called to the men, 'Soldiers, we must never be beat, — what will they say in England?' It is needless to say how this appeal was answered.

Note 84, p. 327

A private soldier of the Ninety-Fifth Regiment compared the sound which took place immediately upon the British cavalry mingling with those of the enemy, to 'a thousand tinkers at work mending pots and kettles.'

Note 85, p. 328

No persuasion or authority could prevail upon the French troops to stand the shock of the bayonet. The Imperial Guards, in particular, hardly stood till the British were within thirty yards of them, although the French author, already quoted, has put into their mouths the magnanimous sentiment, 'The Guards never yield — they die.' The same author has covered the plateau, or eminence, of St. Jean, which formed the British position, with redoubts and intrenchments which never had an

[1] The mistakes concerning this observatory have been mutual. The English supposed it was erected for the use of Bonaparte: and a French writer affirms it was constructed by the Duke of Wellington.

existence. As the narrative, which is in many respects curious, was written by an eyewitness, he was probably deceived by the appearance of a road and ditch which run along part of the hill. It may be also mentioned, in criticising this work, that the writer mentions the Château of Hougomont to have been carried by the French, although it was resolutely and successfully defended during the whole action. The enemy, indeed, possessed themselves of the wood by which it is surrounded, and at length set fire to the house itself; but the British (a detachment of the Guards, under the command of Colonel Macdonnell, and afterwards of Colonel Home) made good the garden, and thus preserved, by their desperate resistance, the post which covered the return of the Duke of Wellington's right flank.

GLOSSARY

abbaye, an abbey.
aboon, above.
acton, a buckram vest worn under armour.
ain, own.
air, a sand-bank.
airn, iron.
almagest, an astronomical or astrological treatise.
Almayn, German.
amice, an ecclesiastical vestment.
amrie, ambry, a cupboard, a locker.
an, if.
ance, once.
ane, one.
anerly, alone.
aneugh, enough.
angel, an old English gold coin.
arquebus, a hagbut, or heavy musket.
assagay, a slender spear or lance.
atabal, a kind of kettle-drum.
auld, old; **auld Reekie**, Edinburgh.
aventayle, the movable front of a helmet.
avoid thee, begone.

bairn, a child.
baith, both.
baldric, a belt.
bale, a beacon-fire.
ballium, a fortified court.
bandelier, a belt for carrying ammunition.
ban-dog, a watch-dog.
bandrol, a kind of banner or ensign.
banes, bones.
bang, strike violently, beat, surpass.
barbican, the fortification at a castle-gate.
barded, armoured (said of horses).
barding, horse-armour.
barret-cap, a cloth cap.
bartizan, a small overhanging turret.
basnet, a light helmet.
bassened, having a white stripe down the face.
battalia, a battalion, an army (*not* a plural).
battle, an army.
beadsman, one hired to offer prayers for another.
beamed, having a horn of the fourth year.
beaver, the movable front of a helmet.
Beltane, the first of May (a Celtic festival).
bend, bind.
bend (noun), a heraldic term.
bent, a slope; also, aimed.
beshrew, may evil befall, confound.
bicker, a cup, a wooden vessel.
bill, a kind of battle-axe or halberd.
billmen, troops armed with the bill.
black-jack, a leather jug or pitcher.
blaze, blazon, proclaim.
blink, a glimpse.
bluidy, bloody.
bonail, i. e., **bonallez**, a god-speed, parting with a friend.
bonnet-pieces, gold coins with the king's cap (bonnet) on them.
boot and bale, help and hurt.
boune, bowne, prepare, make ready.
boune, ready, prepared.
bountith, a gratuity.
bourd, a jest.
bow o' kye, a herd of cattle.
bower, a chamber, a lodging-place, a lady's apartments.
bra', braw, brave.
brach, a bitch-hound.
bracken, fern.
brae, a hillside.
braid, broad.
branking, prancing.
brast, burst.
bratchet, a slowhound.

brigantine, a kind of body armour.
brigg, a bridge.
brock, a badger.
broke, quartered (the cutting up of a deer).
brose, broth.
brotikins, buskins.
buff, a thick cloth.
burn, a brook.
busk, dress, prepare.
buxom, lively.
by times, betimes, early.

caird, a tinker.
cairn, a heap of stones, a rocky point.
canna, cotton-grass.
cantle, the crown.
canty, cheerful, lively.
cap of maintenance, a cap worn by the king-at-arms or chief herald.
carle, a fellow.
carline, a woman, a witch.
carp, talk.
cast, a pair (of hawks).
causey, a causeway.
chanters, the pipes of the bagpipe.
check at, meditate attack (in falconry).
cheer, face, countenance.
claymore, a large sword.
clerk, a scholar.
clip, clasp, embrace.
clout, mend.
cogie, a small wooden bowl.
combust, an astrological term.
corbel, a bracket.
coronach, a dirge.
correi, a hollow in a hillside, a resort of game.
crabs, crab-apples.
craig, the head.
crenell, an aperture for shooting arrows through.
cresset, a hanging lamp or chandelier.
crouse, bold.
culver, a small cannon.
cumber, trouble.
cummer, a gossip, an intimate friend.
curch, a matron's coif, or head-dress.
cushat-dove, a wood-pigeon.
cutty, short.

daggled, bespattered.
darkling, in the dark.
daunder, saunter, wander.
daunton, subdue, tame.
deas, a dais, a platform.
deft, skilful.
demi-volt, a movement in horsemanship.
dern, hid.
dight, decked, dressed, prepared.
dingle, a closely wooded hollow.
dinna, do not.
dinnle, tinkle, thrill.
dint, strike, knock.
dirdum, an uproar.
donjon, the main tower or keep of a castle.
doom, judgment, arbitration.
double tressure, a kind of border in heraldry.
dought, was able, could.
down, a hill.
downa, do not.
dramock, meal and water.
drie, suffer, endure.
drouth, thirst.
duddies, rags, tatters.
dwam, a swoon, a fainting fit.

earn, erne, an eagle.
eburnine, made of ivory.
een, eyes.
embossed, exhausted by running, foaming at the mouth (hunter's term).
emprise, enterprise.
ensenzie, an ensign, a war-cry.
even, spotless, pure.

failzie, failure.
falcon, a kind of small cannon.
fand, found.
fang, to catch.
far yaud, the signal made by a shepherd to his dog, when he is to drive away some sheep at a distance.
Fastern's night, Shrove Tuesday.
fauld, a sheep-fold.

fay, faith.
ferlie, a marvel.
fieldfare, a species of thrush.
fleech, flatter, cajole.
flemens-firth, an asylum for outlaws.
foray, a predatory inroad.
force, a waterfall.
fosse, a ditch, a moat.
fou, full, tipsy.
frae, from.
fretted, adorned with raised work.
fro, from.
frounced, flounced, plaited.

gae, go; **gaed**, went.
gaitling, a young child.
galliard, a lively dance.
gallowglasses, heavy-armed soldiers (Celtic).
gane, gone.
gang, go.
gar, make.
gazehound, a hound that pursues by sight rather than scent.
gear, goods, possessions.
gent, high-born, valiant and courteous.
gest, a deed, an exploit.
ghast, ghastly.
gie, give.
gin, if.
gipon, a doublet or jacket worn under armour.
glaive, a broadsword.
glamour, a magical illusion.
glee-maiden, a dancing-girl.
gleg, quick, sharp, lively.
glidders, slippery stones.
glozing, flattering.
gonfalone, a banner or ensign.
gorged, having the throat cut.
gorget, armour for the throat.
graith, armour.
gramarye, magic.
gramercy, great thanks (French, *grand merci*).
gree, prize.
greet and grane, weep and groan.
gripple, grasping, miserly.
grisly, horrible, grim.
guarded, edged, trimmed.
gude, good.
gules, red (heraldic).
gylte, a young sow.

hackbuteer, a soldier armed with hackbut or hagbut, a musketeer.
hae't, **haet**, an atom.
haffets, cheeks.
hag, broken ground in a bog.
hagbut (hackbut, haquebut, arquebus, harquebuss, etc.), a heavy musket.
halberd, halbert, a combined spear and battle-axe.
hale, haul, drag.
hame, home.
handsel, a gift, earnest money.
hanger, a short broadsword.
harried, plundered, sacked.
haud, hold.
hearse, a canopy over a tomb, or the tomb itself.
heeze, heise, hoist, raise.
hent, seize.
heriot, tribute due to a lord from a vassal.
heron-shew, a young heron.
hight, called, named, promised.
holt, wood, woodland.
hosen, hose (old plural).
howf, howff, a haunt, a resort.

idlesse, idleness.
ilka, each, every.
imp, a child.
inch, an island.

jack, a leather jacket, a kind of armour for the body.
jennet, a small Spanish horse.
jerkin, a kind of short coat.
jerrid, a wooden javelin about five feet long.
jowing, ringing or tolling.

kale, broth.
kebbuck, cheese.
keek, peep.
ken, know.
kern, a light-armed soldier (Celtic).

kill, a cell.
kipper, salmon or sea trout.
kirk, a church.
kirn, the Scottish harvest-home.
kirtle, a skirt, a gown.
kist, a chest.
kittle, ticklish, delicate.
knosp, a knob (architectural).
knowe, a knoll, a hillock.
kye, cows.

lair, learning.
lair, to stick in the mud.
largesse, largess, liberality, gift.
lauds, psalms.
launcegay, a kind of spear.
laverock, a lark.
leading-staff, a staff carried by a commanding officer.
leaguer, a camp.
leal-fast, loyal, faithful.
leash, a thong for leading a greyhound; also the hounds so led.
leister, to spear.
leven, a lawn, an open space between or among woods.
leveret, a young hare.
levin, lightning, thunderbolt.
libbard, a leopard.
Lincoln green, a cloth worn by huntsmen.
linn, a waterfall, a pool below a fall, a precipice.
linstock, lintstock, a handle for the lint or match used in firing cannon.
lists, the enclosure for a tournament.
litherlie, mischievous, vicious.
loon, a rogue, a strumpet.
loot, let.
lorn, lost.
loup, leap.
lourd, rather.
lout, bend, stoop.
lurch, rob.
lurcher, a dog that **lurches** (lurks), or lies in wait for game.
lurdane, a blockhead.
lyke-wake, the watching of a corpse before burial.
lyme-dog, a bloodhound.

mair, more.
make, do.
malison, a malediction, a curse.
Malvoisie, Malmsey wine.
march, a border, a frontier.
march-treason, offences committed on the Border.
massy, massive.
maukin, a hare.
maun, must.
mavis, the thrush.
meikle, much, great.
melle, mell, meddle.
merk, a Scottish coin worth about $13\frac{1}{3}d.$
merle, the blackbird.
merlin, a species of falcon.
mewed, shut up, confined.
mickle, much, great.
minion, favourite.
miniver, a kind of fur.
mirk, dark.
mony, many.
moonlight, smuggled spirits.
morion, a steel cap, a helmet.
morrice-pike, a long heavy spear.
morris, a kind of dance.
morsing-horns, powder-flasks.
moss, a morass, a bog.
mot, mote, must, might.
muckle, much, large.
muir, a moor, a heath.
mullet, a figure of a star, usually with five straight points.

nae, no.
need-fire, a beacon-fire.
neist, next.
nese, a nose.

oe, an island.
O hone, alas!
Omrahs, nobles (Turkish).
or, gold (heraldic).
orra, odd, occasional.
owches, jewels.
ower, over, too.

pall, fine or rich cloth.
pallioun, a pavilion.

palmer, a pilgrim to the Holy Land.
pardoner, a seller of priestly indulgences.
partisan, a halberd, a combination of spear and battle-axe.
peel, a Border tower.
pensils, small pennons or streamers.
pentacle, a magic diagram.
pibroch, a Highland air on the bagpipe.
pied, variegated.
pike, pick.
pinnet, a pinnacle.
pirn, a spool, a reel.
placket, a stomacher, a petticoat, a slit in a petticoat, etc.
plate-jack, coat-armour.
plump, a body of cavalry, a group, a company.
poke, a sack, a pocket.
port, a lively tune, a catch.
post and pair, an old game at cards.
pow, a head.
pranked, dressed up, adorned.
presence, the royal presence-chamber.
pricked, spurred.
pricker, a horseman, a mounted soldier.
propine, a present.
prore, the prow.
pryse, the note blown at the death of the game.
puir, poor.
pursuivant, an attendant on a herald.

quaigh, a wooden cup, composed of staves hooped together.
quarry, game (hunter's term).
quatre-feuille, quatrefoil (Gothic ornament).
quit, requite.

rack, a floating cloud.
racking, flying, like a breaking cloud.
rade, rode.
rais, the master of a vessel.
reads, counsels.
reave, tear away.
rebeck, an ancient musical instrument, an early form of the fiddle.
rede, a story, counsel, advice.
reiver, a plunderer, a robber.
reliquaire, a repository for relics.
retrograde, an astrological term.
rie, a prince or chief; **O hone a rie**, alas for the chief!
rin, run.
risp, creak.
rive, tear.
rochet, a bishop's short surplice.
rokelay, a short cloak.
rood, a cross (as in **Holy-Rood**).
room, a piece of land.
rowan, the mountain-ash.
runnel, a small stream of water.
ruth, pity, compassion.

sack, Sherry or Canary wine.
sackless, innocent.
sae, so.
saga, a Scandinavian epic.
sained, blessed.
sair, sore, very.
sall, shall.
saltier, in heraldry an ordinary in the form of a St. Andrew's cross.
salvo-shot, a salute of artillery.
sark, a shirt.
saye, say, assertion.
scalds, Scandinavian minstrels.
scallop, a pilgrim's cockle-shell worn as an emblem.
scapular, an ecclesiastical scarf or short cloak.
scathe, harm, injury.
scaur, a cliff, a precipitous bank of earth.
scaur'd, scared.
scrae, a bank of loose stones.
scrogg, a stunted tree, underwood.
sea-dog, a seal.
seguidille, a Spanish dance.
selcouth, strange, uncouth.
selle, a saddle.
seneschal, the steward of a castle.
sewer, an officer who serves up a feast.
shalm, a shawm, a musical instrument.
sheeling, a shepherd's hut.
sheen, bright, shining.

shent, shamed.
shirra, a sheriff.
shrieve, shrive, absolve.
shroud, a garment, a plaid.
sic, such.
siller, silver.
skirl, scream, sound shrilly.
sleights, tricks, stratagems.
slogan, the war-cry or gathering word of a Border clan.
snood, a maiden's hair-band or fillet.
soland, solan-goose, gannet.
sooth, true, truth.
sped, despatched, 'done for.'
speer, speir, ask.
speerings, tidings.
spell, make out, study out.
sperthe, a battle-axe.
splent, a splinter.
springlet, a small spring.
spule, a shoulder.
spurn, kick.
stag of ten, one having ten branches on his antlers.
stamock, the stomach.
stance, a station.
stane, stone.
stark, stout, stalwart.
stern, a star.
sterte, started.
stirrup-cup, a parting cup.
stole, an ecclesiastical scarf (sometimes a robe).
stoled, wearing the **stole**.
store, stored up.
stoun, stown, stolen.
stour, severe.
stowre, battle, tumult.
strain, stock, race.
strath, a broad river-valley.
strathspey, a Highland dance.
streight, strait.
strook, struck, stricken.
stumah, faithful.
swith, haste, quickly.
syde, long.
syne, since; **lang syne**, long ago.

tabard, a herald's coat.
tait, a tuft.
targe, a shield.
tarn, a mountain lake.
tartan, the full Highland dress, made of the chequered stuff so termed.
tett, a plait or plaited knot.
throstle, a thrush.
tide, time.
tine, lose; **tint**, lost.
tire, a head-dress.
toom, empty.
tottered, tattered, ragged.
toun, a town.
train, allure, entice.
tressure, a border (heraldic).
trews, Highland trousers.
trine, threefold, an astrological term.
trow, believe, trust.
trowls, passes round.
truncheon, a staff, the shaft of a spear.
twa, two.
tyke, a dog.
tyne, lose.

uncouth, strange, unknown.
uneath, not easily, with difficulty.
unsparred, unbarred.
upsees, a Bacchanalian cry or interjection, borrowed from the Dutch.
urchin, an elf.

vail, avail.
vail, lower, let fall.
vair, a kind of fur, probably of the squirrel.
vantage-coign, an advantageous position.
vaunt-brace, or **warn-brace**, armour for the forearm.
vaward, van, front.
vilde, vile.

wad, would.
wan, won.
Warden-raid, a raid commanded by a Border Warden in person.
ware, beware of.
warlock, a wizard.
warped, frozen.
warre, worse.

warrison, a note of assault.
warstle, wrestle.
wassail, spiced ale, a drinking-bout.
wauk, wake.
waur, worse.
weapon-schaw, a military array of a county, a muster.
weed, a garment.
weird, fate, doom.
whenas, when.
whilere, while-ere, erewhile, a while ago.
whiles, sometimes.
whilom, whilome, formerly.
whin, gorse, furze.
whingers, knives, poniards.
whinyard, a hunter's knife.
wight, active, gallant, war-like.
wildering, bewildering.
wimple, a veil.
woe-worth, woe be to.
woned, dwelt.
wraith, an apparition, a spectre.
wreak, avenge.
wud, would.
wuddie, the gallows.

yare, ready.
yate, a gate.
yaud, see **far yaud.**
yerk, jerk.
yode, went.

END OF VOLUME III

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